

Self- Nature Relationships Revisited:

Deep Ecology, Eco-feminism, and Wang Wei's Landscape Poetry



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Abstract of thesis entitled: Self- Nature Relationships Revisited: Deep Ecology, Eco-feminism, and Wang Wei's Landscape Poetry

This thesis aims at responding to the problems of deep ecology's and ecofeminism's proposed self/ nature relationship with reference to Wang Wei's object- oriented landscape poetry. Issues like how deep ecology and ecofeminism understand human/ nature alienation as a problem in the current environmental crisis, the power structure between human and nature, how human/ nature dominations are in relation to other oppressions such as men/ women, and how gender is important to the issues of environmental discussions are included. In discussing the deep ecology- ecofeminism debate, the contents of deep ecology and ecofeminism, their general disagreements, and their respective inherent problems are also revealed. In this thesis, focus will be mainly put on the deep ecology and ecofeminism proposed model of self/ nature relationships, that is, the principle of Self Realization proposed by deep ecology and the relational self proposed by ecofeminism. I argue in the thesis that while Self Realization has been criticized by ecofeminism as masculinist, ecofeminism's relational self is equally doubtful in establishing an unproblematic ground. It is where the specific self/ nature relationship found in Wang Wei's object- oriented landscape poetry contributes in this thesis. I argue that the self/ nature relationship found in Wang Wei's object- oriented landscape poetry, which is non- masculinist, inter-related

and multi- causal, provides a third alternative to the problems of both deep ecology and ecofeminism.

本文主要探討深層生態學(deep ecology) 生態女性主義(ecofeminism)和所提出的人/自然關係模式的內在問題，並嘗試提出在王維山水詩中找到的人/自然關係模式回應了兩者的問題。當中涉及的問題包括有：深層生態學與生態女性主義如何理解人/自然的離化是當今環境問題的根本、人與自然之間的權力結構關係、人/自然的二元論如何和其他二元論，例如男/女的二元論拉上關係、性別怎樣成為在討論環境問題上一個不可分缺的議題等等。而在探討深層生態學與生態女性主義的辯論中，我們也會涉獵深層生態學與生態女性主義的主張和內容，它們之間的爭辯點和它們各自的內在問題。本文更會集中討論深層生態學與生態女性主義兩者所提出的兩個人/自然關係的模式：深層生態學所提出的「自我實現」(Self Realization)和生態女性主義所提出的「關係我」(the relational self)。在「自我實現」被生態女性主義評擊為男性中心主義(masculinist)的同時，生態女性主義所提出的「關係我」同樣面對著一個充滿問題的根基。而在王維山水詩中找到的人/自然關係模式 — 一種非男性中心主義、互相牽連和多層關係的人/自然關係模式 — 為這些問題打出了一個出口。

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Introduction

Facing contemporary environmental destructions and problems, many have called for actions and new policies. Some have called for a change in governmental policy, some have urged for a philosophical foundation to support activism, and some have urged for a personal change in ecological consciousness. Deep ecology and ecofeminism are two major discourses in environmental discussions. Deep ecology traces the environmental crisis in a philosophical approach, urging for a transformation in personal consciousness. The “deepness” in deep ecology is in contrast to the “shallowness” of environmentalism. As deep ecologists believe, technological solutions to the current environmental problems are only taking stop-gap measures, only a transformation in personal consciousness is the ultimate solution. Hence, deep ecologists advocate Self Realization as a new self/ nature communication model to reform the current problematic master/ slave self/ nature relationship model. Ecofeminism, on the other hand, tries to apply feminist analysis to environmental discussions. Ecofeminism believes that the human/ nature oppression cannot be analyzed independently, but should be understood together with the men/ women oppression, as the two oppressions are interdependent. Due to the different groundings of these two discourses, severe disagreements and debates are to be

expected. Analyzing the debates and disagreements between the two is far from meaningless. The debates include the most fundamental problems of the environmental discussions, such as how we can understand the relations between human and current environmental destructions, and the position of human in relation to nature. These are all urgent questions, deserving our real attentions. What I am trying to do in this thesis is to look closely into the “deep ecology- ecofeminism debate”¹, that is, the general disagreements and controversies between deep ecology and ecofeminism, and bring a new perspective to these disagreements with reference to Wang Wei’s object- oriented landscape poetry². As the debate is rather unsystematic, in the thesis, I try to tease out some of the important issues from the debate, demonstrate their problems and disagreements, and suggest a perspective that sheds new light on the problems. As deep ecology and ecofeminism argue vigorously about the fundamental problems of today’s environmental crisis, the thesis starts with their different views on the “causes” of the environmental destruction.

The whole deep- ecology ecofeminism debate was initiated by Ariel Salleh’s (1984) essay, “Deeper than deep ecology: the eco-feminist connection”, from where Salleh claims that ecofeminism is having a “deeper” understanding of environmental problems than deep ecology. She criticizes deep ecology as being masculinist in the essay, arguing that, for example, deep ecology overlooks the implicit masculinism in

the term “Man” (p. 340). The debate then began and developed in an unsystematic way, as Eugene Hargrove notes, “deep ecologists and ecofeminists are as yet not even completely in agreement about what they are disagreeing about, this debate can be expected to be rather lengthy” (1989, p. 3-4). Yet, key issues can still be identified in the debate. Ecofeminist Karen Warren in her essay, “Ecofeminist Philosophy and Deep Ecology” (c1999), tries to summarize the deep ecology- ecofeminism debate.

The first issue, anthropocentrism (human- centeredness) versus androcentrism, is one of the most controversial and important issues in the debate as it discusses the main problems or causes of current environmental crisis. As ecofeminist Plumwood states, “[t]he critique of anthropocentrism or human domination of nature is a new and in my view inestimably important contribution to our understanding of Western society, its history, its current problems, and its structures of domination” (Plumwood, p. 70, 1994) Hence, the anthropocentrism/ androcentrism debate provides an important framework in understanding the problems of environmental crisis and more importantly, the power structures of domination, which serves as an important background throughout the whole thesis.

Both deep ecology and ecofeminism identify anthropocentrism as a problem in current environmental discourse, yet they interpret the term differently. Deep ecology holds that environmental problems are due to human- centeredness in the sense that

non-humans³ are only seen as instruments, resulting in a master- slave relation between humans and non-humans. Hence, according to deep ecology, to uphold the intrinsic value of nature is an important step in breaking down the master- slave relation between humans and nature.

On the other hand, ecofeminism (which holds that environmental discussions are feminist issues) also identifies anthropocentrism as a central problem in the current environmental crisis but reads the problem differently than deep ecology. For ecofeminists, the problem of anthropocentrism lies not merely in viewing non-humans as instruments, but also in the dualistic structure underlying this instrumental view of nature. Furthermore, as almost all ecofeminists agree, this dualistic relation between human/ nature cannot be understood alone. For all oppressions, whether on grounds of class, race or gender, are inter-linked and reinforcing. They cannot be understood and solved independently. Understanding these oppressions interdependently is the only way to spell out the real problems of these oppressions. To distinguish from deep ecology's understanding of anthropocentrism, ecofeminist Plumwood (1997) names this reading of anthropocentrism the liberation model of anthropocentrism, while many other ecofeminists straightforwardly call it androcentrism (male- centeredness). In a nutshell, then, ecofeminism, as an attempt to address environmental issues with feminist analysis, believes that the oppression of nature and the oppression of women

(and other oppressions) are not separate issues but inter-related. Furthermore, many ecofeminists believe that the connection between women and nature, either historically or essentially, is so important that it provides an alternative to the contemporary masculinist dualistic model. For instance, the egalitarianism found in matriarchic society is held up as a better model than the masculinist dualistic model. Motherhood and childcare are seen as important sources of alternative values in establishing the ideal egalitarian and peaceful society.

Following from these different understandings of “anthropocentrism” as a key problem in environmental issues, deep ecology and ecofeminism propose two different accounts of self/ nature relation to address the problem. Deep ecology proposes Self Realization to re-establish the lost link between self/ nature relation and re-affirm the intrinsic value of nature. Of the many principles proposed by deep ecology, including bioegalitarianism and the deep ecology platform (see chapter one), Self Realization is the most important and significant principle, as this is one of the most crucial advocacy of deep ecology, and the deep ecology- ecofeminism debate over Self Realization “shows the main differences between the two ideologies” (Kheel, 1990, p. 129). As later chapters will show, to ecofeminism, the Self Realization advocated by deep ecology is in fact still masculinist in that it fails to identify the “real” problem of “anthropocentrism”, that is, the highly problematical

underlying dualism.⁴ To escape from such masculinism, deep ecology has to acknowledge both continuity and difference in the human- nature relation, which the proposed notion of Self Realization fails to do.

Significantly, though ecofeminism provides a detailed criticism of Self Realization, it fails to provide an adequate account of the self/ nature relationship itself. Relational self, ecofeminism's proposed model of self/ nature relationship, successfully highlights the important elements of a new self/ nature relation that overcomes the problem of masculinism, but fails to offer a demonstratable ground for such a relation. Short of essentializing the women- nature connection, ecofeminists simply do not explain how this relational self can come into being. Neither do they explain how the relational self is related to the women- nature connection, which ecofeminists have stressed as important repeatedly. This vagueness in the ecofeminist account of the relational self suggests fundamental problems that ecofeminists are unable to solve. The women- nature connection that is one of the basic groundings of ecofeminism is indeed highly problematical. For instance, claims of a women- nature connection may easily fall into the problems of the universalization and generalization of women's experiences, which overlook key difference that some ecofeminists are aware of, such as that between whites and blacks. As we will see in the thesis, to posit a necessary women- nature connection as the grounding of the relational self is simply

impossible and problematical. It is in light of this impasse that the specific self/ nature relation found in Wang Wei's object- oriented landscape poetry is valuable in providing a new perspective on the relational self. As we will see, the selected poems manage to escape the problems of masculinism that ecofeminism identifies in deep ecology's proposal of Self Realization on the one hand, and offer a grounded conception of the self- nature relation that parallels ecofeminism's understanding of the relational self on the other hand.

Before proceeding to the concrete arguments in different chapters, two important words need to be clarified first in this thesis, namely "human" and "self". Throughout this thesis, "self" is distinguished from "human" in the sense that self refers to an individual while "human" refers to a general category of "human beings", as relative to non-humans. For instance, in the context of Wang's object- oriented poems, the self refers to the poet rather than the general category of humans. Yet, despite this distinction, there may not be a significant difference between the two, especially when discussing the human (as general) or self (as an individual) relationship with nature. It is because, as we will see, both human as a group and self as an individual can relate to nature in the same way. The self/ nature relationship discussed in chapter two analyzes how each human as an individual relates with nature. In this respect, the two words are almost interchangeable and synonymous in the thesis.

The chapters

To begin, chapter one will focus on the anthropocentrism/ androcentrism debate, where major differences between deep ecology and ecofeminism are clearly revealed. The meanings of deep ecology and ecofeminism are also discussed in this context. The chapter will discuss how deep ecology and ecofeminism understand the problem of “anthropocentrism” differently. We will also see how the women- nature connection is important to ecofeminism and how this women- nature connection poses problems for ecofeminism.

Chapter two will discuss and analyze the “solution” proposed by deep ecology and ecofeminism respectively. We will first examine deep ecology’s self/ nature account, Self Realization, its content and then ecofeminists’ criticisms on it. These criticisms become more explicit and clear when we juxtapose Self Realization with the relational selfhood, ecofeminism’s conception of self/ nature relation. This chapter ends with an account of how the problems of women- nature connection render ecofeminism’s understanding of the relational self fundamentally problematical.

In chapter three, I will bring in an account of Wang’s object- oriented landscape poetry and discuss how the specific self/ nature relationship portrayed therein can contribute to the debate. I argue that Wang’s account provides a non- masculinist account of the self in relation to nature that parallels ecofeminism’s notion of the

relational self without assuming a problematic women- nature connection, hence bringing a new light to the issues of human- nature relation at the heart of the deep ecology ecofeminism debate.

Chapter one The anthropocentrism/ androcentrism debate

The anthropocentrism/ androcentrism debate mainly concerns the disagreement between deep ecology and ecofeminism over whether anthropocentrism (human-centeredness) or androcentrism (male-centeredness) is the real cause of environmental problems. It is important to point out that the anthropocentrism/ androcentrism debate discussed here focuses specifically on how deep ecology and ecofeminism differ in understanding the human/ nature alienation as a destructive force. By no means am I suggesting an anthropocentrism/ androcentrism dualism, nor am I suggesting that either anthropocentrism or androcentrism is the *only* root cause to the problems. What I seek to do here is to give a detailed account of the anthropocentrism/ androcentrism debate so as to clarify key differences between deep ecology and ecofeminism.

Since the deep ecology- ecofeminism debate began with the latter's criticisms of the former, in this chapter, we will follow ecofeminism's critique of deep ecology's understanding of "anthropocentrism". We will examine on what grounds ecofeminism criticizes and disagrees with deep ecology. This will be followed by a discussion of the implicit problems of ecofeminism's own specific groundings, which, as I argue, render the self/ nature relationship proposed by ecofeminism highly problematical.

Deep ecology – the critique of anthropocentrism in environmentalism

Anthropocentrism, or human-centeredness, has been highly problematical to many green thinkers. Deep ecology, seeing anthropocentrism as the culprit of the contemporary environmental crisis, grounds their discourse on critiquing anthropocentrism.

The deep ecology movement was first initiated by Arne Naess in 1973 to go beyond anthropocentrism in environmentalism. “Deep Ecology” literatures include writings by green thinkers like Arne Naess, David Rothenburg, Bill Devall, George Sessions and Fox Warwick. The concept of “Deep Ecology” varies from Naess’s Ecosophy T to Warwick’s transpersonal ecology.⁵ The meaning of “deep” in the term deep ecology lies in the contrast to the “shallowness” of environmentalism. According to deep ecology, environmentalism is a movement that focuses only on the well-beings of people in the developed countries. An example of such focus is environmentalism’s preference for immediate solutions such as pollution control device to deal with environmental problems of pollution. For instance, resolving the problem of pollution relies heavily on technological development to reduce pollution to a satisfactory level, instead of having a transformation in living style and habit or an internal change in consciousness on treating non-humans. In short, as Naess notes, environmentalism gives preferences and priorities to sustainable economic and

industrial growth of the developed countries rather than considering the values of non-humans as well. Deep ecology criticizes this “shallow ecology” for placing humans at the center of the world, seeing non-humans as mere instruments that are valuable only in terms of their contributions to the economic growth and development of the developed societies.

To deep ecology, this kind of environmentalist thinking — placing humans at the center, concerning only about human’s well-beings, and seeing non-humans as merely instrumental — is anthropocentric and such anthropocentrism is the root cause of environmental problems. Anthropocentrism *legitimizes* ecological destructions and all kinds of human dominations. Thus war and science’s actions (towards non-humans) can all be legitimated in the name of “humanity” or simply “man”. Neil Armstrong’s moon walk, for instance, has been glorified in the name of humanity and celebrated as a break-through in human history, a “giant leap for mankind” (Fox, 2001 p.229). In this view, a master/ slave relationship is formed between human and nature, with humans at the center and non-humans valued only in accordance with human needs and interests. Some deep ecologists trace this anthropocentrism to the Judeo-Christian tradition and the Cartesian mind/ body dualism which attributes soul only to human and relegates non-humans to pure matters (Sessions, 1995). This western dominant worldview places humans at the center as master of the world. It sets human

and nature apart, reducing non-humans to mere instruments.

Against this anthropocentric view of non-humans as instruments, deep ecology proposes a “non- anthropocentric” environmental discourse. A key version of this discourse advances two concepts, relational total field and biospherical egalitarianism (bioegalitarianism), to place human in relational terms with nature (Naess, 1989). Relational total field aims at reconnecting humans with non-humans. Instead of viewing humans as separated from and master of the world, relational total field situates humans in the world and sets everything in relational terms. That is, the definition of A is relational to B, and A and B will not be the same without these relations. Specifically, the understanding of humans cannot be dissociated from their relations with non-humans. Detaching humans from these relations results in the current dominant model of master-slave relations with non-humans. Bioegalitarianism stresses that non-humans have “*equal rights to live and blossom*” as humans (Naess, 1989, p. 28). To make this claim is to highlight the intrinsic value of nature and hence to go against the instrumental view of environmentalism. In other words, bioegalitarianism suggests that when humans realize the intrinsic value of non-humans, they will come to respect non-humans as living entities. Non humans will not be regarded as pure matters, and humans will no longer place themselves as the center of the world.⁶ Thus, Deep ecology’s highlighting the intrinsic value of

non-humans and re-situating humans as a knot of the organic web attempts to obliterate human-centeredness and go beyond anthropocentrism.

Building on the non- anthropocentric vision of the relational total field and bioegalitarianism, Naess further proposes Self Realization as a means to achieve the new human- nature relation, that is, to reconnect human with nature and to acknowledge the intrinsic value of nature. This principle of Self Realization will be discussed in detail in chapter two. In the rest of this chapter, I will discuss how ecofeminism disagrees with and responds to deep ecology's understanding of "anthropocentrism" as the "real cause" of environmental problems. This will bring out fundamental disagreements and differences between deep ecology and ecofeminism.

Significantly, deep ecology sees anthropocentrism as the underlying causes of not only environmental domination but also all oppressions (Fox, 2001). According to deep ecology, anthropocentrism legitimates the superiority of the dominant group. It regulates what a human is and what constitutes the essence of being a human, which allows men, whites and capitalists to see themselves as "*more fully human* than others":

[T]o be human" also means to be '*more fully human* than others, such as women... the "lower" class, blacks, and non-Westerners... The cultural spell of anthropocentrism has been considered sufficient to justify not only moral

superiority..., but also all kinds of domination within human society – let alone domination of the obviously nonhuman world. (Fox, p. 229)

Just as anthropocentrism sets nature as pure matter, then, it also sets women, blacks and workers as inferior and subordinate. Hence, to deep ecology, anthropocentrism is an adequate account of all oppressions, and ecofeminism and other discourses can be subsumed under deep ecology's effort to overcome anthropocentrism. As Fox puts it, there is simply no difference between deep ecology and ecofeminism:

[i]t becomes difficult to see any significant difference between what they call ecofeminism, green socialism, and so on and what others call deep ecology (such differences as remain are simply differences of theoretical flavor and emphasis rather than differences of substance). (Fox, 2001, p. 231)

In this view, the only difference found in deep ecology and ecofeminism is perhaps the different groundings of the two discourses. Both share a common view of the power structure of human and nature. And since anthropocentrism is adequate for explaining the power structure of all oppressions, it is unimportant to note the difference between deep ecology and ecofeminism. This overlooking of the difference between deep ecology and ecofeminism incurs ecofeminism's objection that deep ecology simply fails to understand what ecofeminism really means⁷.

As I argue in the following section, ecofeminism stresses particularly on the

inter-relatedness and inseparability of all oppressions, while deep ecology sees no connections between oppressions except for a common underlying cause in anthropocentrism. For instance, deep ecologist Zimmerman (1987, 1994) argues that the domination of women and domination of nature are two separate things and deep ecology needs not be concerned with the former. "Deep ecologists are still only reformists: they want to improve the humanity-nature relationship without taking the radical step of eliminating both man's domination of woman... and the culturally enforced self-denigration of woman." (Zimmerman, 1987, p. 38) To understand and discuss the oppression of nature, then, the issues of gender, class and race can be bracketed. Indeed, Zimmerman further asserts, women have been equally destructive to nature as men, and should not be exempted from the responsibility of being destructive to earth other. Women and men should bear the same responsibility.

This blindness to the interrelationship between the oppression of women and the domination of nature triggers ecofeminism's objections and criticism of deep ecology. To ecofeminism, as long as deep ecology fails to realize the "real problems" of "anthropocentrism" and the connections of human domination of nature to other oppressions, it cannot go beyond anthropocentrism. What ecofeminism understand to be the "real problem" and how this "real problem" links with other oppressions are thus central to ecofeminism's criticisms of deep ecology. It accounts for

ecofeminism's disagreement with and criticisms of deep ecology for failing to recognize the inter-relatedness between all oppressions.

Ecofeminism and the critique of deep ecology's understanding of anthropocentrism

To ecofeminists, deep ecology's understanding of anthropocentrism is fundamentally flawed and herein lies the crux of the ecofeminism- deep ecology debate. Val Plumwood offers a clear articulation of the ecofeminism critique in her recent writings (1997, 2002). According to Plumwood, to claim anthropocentrism as problematical only because of its views of non-humans as mere instrument is far too simple. Like other ecofeminists, Plumwood believes that the "real problem" of human- centeredness goes beyond human domination of nature and has to be understood in terms of the interrelatedness of oppressions.

As the name ecofeminism (ecological feminism) literally denotes, ecofeminism is a group of ideas which tries to establish connections between feminist analysis and environmental issues. The word ecofeminism is first coined by Francoise D'Eaubonne in 1974. In general, ecofeminists all agree that ecology is in fact a feminist issue. King (1990) provides a good general statement on ecofeminism,

[I]n ecofeminism, nature is the central category of analysis. An analysis of the

interrelated dominations of nature – psyche and sexuality, human oppression, and nonhuman nature – and the historic position of women in relation to those forms of domination is the starting point of ecofeminist theory. (King, 1990, p. 117)

To ecofeminists, the understanding of the oppressions of women will help to understand the oppressions and hence the liberation of nature, since the “twin dominations of women and nature” are “intimately connected and mutually reinforcing” (Warren, 1999, p. 24; King, 1993, p. 70). Karen Warren’s work (Warren & Cheney, 1996; Warren, 1987, 1996, 2000) demonstrates this connection clearly. She believes that there is a “logic of domination” underlying all “-isms of domination”, which includes racism, classism, heterosexism and sexism. That is, the structure of *justifying* subordination in all dominations is identical. It is a structure of dualistic pairs constituted in the logic of domination. To put it simply, the oppression of men over women, human over nature rely largely on a hierarchical and organization of differences between men/ women, human/ nature. The dualistic opposition of men (human) as a superior group against women (nature) as an inferior group justifies domination and subordination. Thus, women and nature are associated in the way that they are both oppressed under the same logic of domination. Warren is not saying that androcentrism (male- centeredness) is the only root of the problems. On the contrary, deep ecology’s identifying a single root of the cause of all oppressions is indeed

“patriarchal thinking”, “[t]here is no single root cause of oppression, domination, or exploitation; indeed, one could argue that it is typical of patriarchal thinking that one looks for single, unitary causal explanations for phenomena” (Warren 1999, p. 257). What the “logic of domination” means is that all oppressions in different historical and cultural contexts are interdependent. They are under the same justification structure, “a logic of domination assumes that superiority justifies subordination” (Warren, 2000, p. 47). As Warren (2000) gives a detail explanation,

(1) At least in Western societies, whenever a group is historically identified with nonhuman nature and the realm of the physical, it is conceptualized as morally inferior to whatever group is historically identified with culture and the realm of the mental.

(2) At least in Western societies, women as a group historically have been identified with nonhuman nature and the realm of the physical, while at least dominant men have been historically identified with culture and the realm of the mental.

Thus, (3) At least in Western societies, women as a group are conceptualized as morally inferior to at least dominant men

(4) For any X and Y, if X is conceptualized as morally inferior to Y, then Y is justified in subordinating (or dominating) X.

Thus, (5) At least in Western societies, dominant men are justified in subordinating (or dominating) both women and nonhuman nature (p.50-51).

As illustrated, the logic of domination justifies the Up as morally superior (and as a dominant) than the Down. For instance, in the above argument, the characteristic of being identified with the realm of mental justifies men's superiority and domination over women and nature (as lack). Seemingly, deep ecology shares a similar view with ecofeminism that there is a unified dominating structure lying behind all oppressions. However, this is only a superficial agreement, as deep ecology sees no connections between these oppressions. To deep ecology, the oppressions can be solved independently, while to Warren and many other ecofeminists, this assumption is highly problematical as all-isms of domination are interdependent and can never be solved independently.

In particular, many ecofeminists stress that the two oppressions of women and nature are inter-related and "mutually reinforcing" historically. For instance, Carolyn Merchant (1983, 1995) grounds her analysis of the twin oppression of women and nature on western historical links. She evaluates these historical links from the ancient Indo European societies to the 19/20th Century. She identifies the 16/17th century struggle between the earth-centered worldview and sun-centered worldview as the

turning point for a mechanistic worldview. When the Indo-Europeans abandoned the earth-centered worldview for a sun-centered one, they abandoned at the same time things which were regarded as non-scientific. Women and nature were regarded as non-scientific, and hence considered necessary to be kept under control. It was at this critical point that man became the master of the world, dominating and rejecting the non-scientific, viewing the world in mechanistic terms. Science, which devalues women and nature, becomes the legitimate conceptual framework.

While Merchant highlights the oppressions of women and nature from a historical perspective, Plumwood (1993, 2002) accentuates the connections of the oppressions of women and nature in the light of western traditional thinking. Starting from Plato and Aristotle, women and nature are depicted as irrational chaos and disorder, especially in contrast to men as rational and order. Human is defined against the natural as controlling the natural and pursuing a “higher type of life” (Plumwood, 1993, p. 109). Descartes’ mind/ body dualism further privileges rationality (mind) to enable humans to exercise power over the natural world and women, relegating nature (women, body) to something to be controlled. The one who can think rationally is the one who rules over the irrationals, to put order to disorder. The universe is, then, divided into two substances, mindful and non-mindful. Women and nature are seen as mere stuffs and instrument, non-mindful and non- agential. As such, the reason/

nature dualism becomes the underlying force of all dualisms. Rationality or reason sets the standard of the superior side, of men over women, human over nature, mind over body. Men have the ability to think and be rational, hence they have to take control over the irrational stuffs including nature, body and women. “[E]verything on the ‘superior’ side can be represented as forms of reason, and virtually everything on the underside can be represented as forms of nature” (Plumwood, 1993, p.44). Rationality justifies the superiority of the men (human). Men are rational (mind) against the pure matter (body) of women and nature, and everything which is irrational is devalued and to be kept under control.

Based on this critique of western thoughts, Plumwood (1993) and other ecofeminists hold that the concept of “human” is implicitly masculinist, as the characteristics of being a human are also the characteristics of being a man, such as rationality, transcendence, domination and control of nature. To be distinctively human means to be rational and rationality is the means for legitimating “humanness”. It is, then, not the case that anthropocentrism is problematical, but, rather, the male-centered rationalism and domination implicated in anthropocentrism (Plumwood, 2002). Though deep ecology also recognizes the problems of mind/ body dualism as the underlying mechanism of all oppressions, its failure to recognize the implicit masculinism behind this dualism, and the interconnection of all oppressions under this

masculinist dualism makes it unacceptable to ecofeminism. As Plumwood stresses, underlying the term “men” is the problematical tradition of rationality that allows men to set themselves apart as superior by highlighting their “rationality” against the “animality” of nature and woman. Science optimizes this mechanism of reason and rationality that places “human” as the core subject and characterizes nature (and women) as irrational, mere stuff and mere matter. Nature is a mere “environment”, the only function of which is to demonstrate human’s creativity, rationality and consciousness. Thus, “human beings” are never “gender- neutral”, but implicitly gendered masculine, making the oppressions of women and nature not two separate things but one (Kheel, p. 179)

Plumwood (1993, 1997) further points out that the dualistic structure of reason/ nature, human/ nature, men/ women, culture/ nature rely heavily on the denial of the other. That is, the superiority of the upper group depends on the denial of the value of the lower group. She specifically lists five characteristics to spell out the problems of dualism: radical exclusion, incorporation, instrumentalism, homogenization and backgrounding.⁸ This detailed explanation of dualism is crucial to our later discussion in that it sets the framework for defining “masculinist”.

1. Radical exclusion (hyperseparation)

The formation of “men” (humans) depends largely on exclusions and denials. Men can acquire his identity only by denying others. Hence, he has to deny others continuously so as to attain a stable identity. This continuous denial of others, or denial dependency, leads to the hyperseparation of the masculine self. Hyperseparation differs from separation in that hyperseparation entails a dualistic exclusion and total denial of the other, while separation merely depicts self and other as two separate entities, without entailing any self/ other dualism and total denial.

Within this process of radical exclusion, continuity is totally neglected, differences between the two entities are highly stressed. Commonalities shared by the two entities are also denied. “Discontinuity is obtained via an account of human identity and virtue which eliminates overlap with the ‘animal within’, or polarises this as not truly part of the self or as belonging to a lower, baser ‘animal’ part of self” (Plumwood, p. 71). Men are characterized as rational, intellectual and dominant while emphatically excluded from features associated with women and nature such as passivism, emotion and altruism. Furthermore, through denying continuity with women and nature and through emphasizing differences with them, men set themselves as the master, forgetting that he is at the same time paradoxically apart from and part of the world. “Human” posits himself outside the interconnected web of

the world, alienating himself from the “natural”. Men (human) define himself by hyperseparating from women (nature). This also explains why men/ women and human/ nature always appear as complementary pairs.

2. Incorporation

Women and nature have been defined as lack in relation to man and human. Both women and nature are not autonomous. Since women and nature are seen as mere matter and environment without any intrinsic value, women and nature are presupposed to be altruistic to satisfy other’s needs. The dualistic structure does not respect or recognize women’s and nature’s agency and autonomy. Women and nature are valued only according to their capacities in fulfilling other’s interests, and recognized only in their assimilation with man. They are simply incorporated into men’s needs and desires.

3. Instrumentalism

Instrumentalism refers to the denial of agency of women and nature. Their agencies are being subsumed into their “master”, man (human). Their only value is to serve and support their “master”. These denied others are not regarded as individuals, their interests are totally disregarded. They are only pure matter and resource to be

used.

4. Homogenization

As an “animal” and instrument, women and nature are all the same and can not be differentiated under the dualism. Their differences are totally denied. At the same time, the dominant class “man” also has to be homogenized to confirm the superiority of the whole group, just as the inferior group needs to be homogenized to affirm the inferiority of the subordinated. In human/ nature, men/ women dualisms, homogenization produces two sharply differentiated and polarized groups, with man assuming the essential “natures” of rational, cultural and social, while woman and nature come to mean natural, irrational and primitive. Nature has been defined as “units” and “resources” instead of its diversity and complexities.

5. Backgrounding and denial

Nature has been set merely as a resource supporting human’s economic growth and technological development. Similarly, women have been regarded as a mere support and background for men. As described by Plumwood, paradoxically both nature and women have been treated as “inessential”, so that their resistance do not pose a threat to human or man. Yet, as their voices can never be completely denied, women and nature are regarded as a source of threat and uncertainties.

Noteworthy, hyperseparation and incorporation deny others differently. Hyperseparation (supported by instrumentalism) denies others through denying their relationship and continuity with others, regarding others as mere stuffs and instruments, while incorporation (supported by homogenization) denies others through denying differences, homogenizing, subsuming others into one's own self. To counter hyperseparation (and instrumentalism), one has to emphasize continuity and relatedness, while to counter incorporation (and homogenization), one has to emphasize differences. Hence, to escape dualism, one has to acknowledge both continuity and differences; otherwise dualism remains. This is especially important for understanding how and why ecofeminists criticize deep ecology's proposed self/nature relationship (Self Realization) as being masculinist, which will be discussed later in chapter two. In short, the five characteristics Plumwood lists gives a clear account of the problems of dualism and the connections between the oppressions of women and nature. It clarifies how, to ecofeminists, the word "human" is never neutral, but, inherently masculinist.

From this account, it is not hard to see why ecofeminism criticizes that, "deep ecologists have not attempted, nor hardly acknowledged, the sophisticated sort of analyses of gender, or of gender and nature, or, especially, of the ways in which anthropocentrism is androcentric, which feminists and ecofeminists have undertaken"

(Slicer, 1995, p. 154). Ecofeminism does not wholly reject deep ecology's understanding of "anthropocentrism" in terms of the instrumentalization of non-humans. Rather, it criticizes this view of anthropocentrism for failing to recognize the deeper problems behind this instrumental view of nature, namely, the dualistic structure of reason/ nature and the interlinked oppressions between women and nature. As Ariel Salleh (1984) indicates in her essay's title, "Deeper than deep ecology: the eco-feminist connection", ecofeminism claims to have a more "in-depth" account of the problems. Deep ecology will not be "deep" enough for ecofeminists unless it can recognize the importance of gender (see also, Salleh, 1984, 1992, 1999; Slicer, 1995; Cheney, 1987; Warren, 1987, 1999; Plumwood, 1997; Kheel 1990). To distinguish from deep ecology's view of anthropocentrism, ecofeminism generally calls this "deeper" reading of "anthropocentrism" androcentrism, or in Plumwood's word, "the liberation model of anthropocentrism" (Plumwood, 1997, p. 335; King, 1993; Slicer 1995; see also Warren, 1999).

Ecofeminism's women- nature connection and its problems

The women- nature connection is of particular importance to ecofeminism not only because ecofeminism sees the oppressions of the two as mutually reinforcing and inter-related, but also because ecofeminism believes the women- nature connection

may provide an “alternative” to the current problematical masculinist dualistic model. Yet, this “alternative” provided by ecofeminists is also problematical. In the following section, I follow Plumwood’s (1990) argument, where she gives a detailed analysis on the argument structure and possible options of ecofeminism over the issue of women-nature connection as an alternative, to explore the importance and problems of ecofeminism’s women- nature connection.

According to Plumwood (1990), the women- nature connection is so important that it cannot be ignored. There are several reasons why this women- nature connection cannot be ignored. As discussed, “human” is implicitly masculine, female and non-humans are backgrounded, homogenized and silent. To ignore the women-nature connection will easily lead into the masculinist model of incorporating and ignoring the voices of women and nature. In order to be a “human- being”, women fit themselves into the masculinist model, resulting in the consolidation of the dominating masculinist model. This act of women’s participation into the cultural sector continues the domination of women, since it submits women under the domination of groups of rationality such as medical experts and science. In fact it is the masculinist’s strategy to ignore the women- nature connection, maintaining the masculinist domination towards women and nature (Plumwood, 1990).

Furthermore, the women- nature connection is the fundamental grounding of

ecofeminism, it is in fact ecofeminists' "*own house*" (Plumwood, 1990, p. 215). This "own house" refers, first, to the fact that the oppression of women and the oppression of nature are inter-related and reinforcing as discussed above. If women fail to recognize their oppressions as associated with the oppression of nature, it is unlikely for them to liberate themselves (and nature) from the domination of "men". Second, the women- nature connection is ecofeminists' "own house" in the sense that it provides an "alternative" to the alienation or "disconnectedness" of the masculinist model (Plumwood, 1990, p. 214). Women are different from men. Women, who are devalued with nature, are not trained to be destructive and dominating like men. More importantly, to some ecofeminists, the devalued "feminine values" are necessary for the liberation of women, nature and even men.⁹ Before explaining how the "feminine values" can be positioned in response to masculinism, it is important to look at Ariel Salleh's proposed ecofeminism as an example.

Salleh (1984) emphasizes the biological difference between women and men, such as child-caring, motherhood and pregnancy, suggesting that women stand closer to nature. "Women's monthly fertility cycle, the tiring symbiosis of pregnancy, the wrench of childbirth and the pleasure of suckling an infant, these things already ground women's consciousness in the knowledge of being coterminous with Nature" (Salleh, 1984, p. 340). The unique experiences of women situate women differently

from men in that, biologically and socially, women already “flow with the system of nature” (Salleh, 1984, p. 340). As Salleh argues, this women- nature connection already embodies a clear alternative and provides ‘an immediate “living” social basis’ to a harmonious relationship between human/ nature which deep ecology is trying to construct in an abstract way (Salleh, p. 340; see also, King, 1993).¹⁰

What Salleh suggests is that the women- nature connection is important as “an alternative” to masculinism. As King further notes, “we can use it (women- nature connection) as a vantage point for creating a different kind of culture and politics that...create a free, ecological society” (1993, p. 74). This echoes Riane Eisler (1990, 1996), who suggests the ancient matriarchal society as the ideal partnership model of the world. As Eisler proposes, the tradition of Goddess and the matriarchal society present an egalitarian and non-patriarchic world which we have long been looking for. In this egalitarian matriarchal society, nature is not regarded as an object for exploitation. ““Feminine” values such as caring, compassion, and non-violence were not subordinate to men and the so-called masculine values of conquest and domination. Rather, the life- giving powers incarnated in women’s bodies were given the highest social value’ (Eisler, 1990, p. 24). Importantly, this re-accentuation of the devalued feminine values and nature does not lead to the subordination of men, but to an egalitarian and harmonious men- women- nature relationship. Eisler calls this the

partnership model, in contrast to the dominating society world-view, where men subordinate women and nature. Rather than a substitution of matriarchal power for patriarchal domination, Eisler suggests, this matriarchal society or the Goddess tradition provides a model for the liberation of women, nature and men.¹¹

To assess such ecofeminist claims, it is important to ask how exactly this femininity create an alternative to masculinity. It is also important to ask how femininity is in relation to, or responds to masculinity. Plumwood (1990) provides a clear account of various possible the relations between femininity and masculinity:¹²

First, the masculinist model is affirmed, while femininity is rejected. (This is the model which ecofeminists are criticizing.)

Second, the masculinist model is affirmed, and femininity is also affirmed.

Third, the masculinist model is rejected, while femininity is affirmed. This is known as the “feminine model” (Plumwood, 1990, p. 227).

Fourth, both masculinity and femininity are rejected.

The first model, which is the traditional masculinist model, is obviously problematical and unacceptable as I have discussed. The other three models are also undesirable. The second model states that masculinity may be complemented by

upholding the devalued femininity. That is, masculinism is not necessarily be challenged but rather complemented and supported by femininity. This second model suggests that we have to re-affirm femininity as human's traits. Besides rationality and order, feminine virtues such as care and love should also be treated as human traits. To Plumwood, this is problematic: since femininity has long been prescribed as a complement under the masculinist model, the reaffirmation of femininity without challenging the masculinist model, easily confines women to its complementary roles. For example, nurturance is one of the most common traits ecofeminists advocate. Yet, this "feminine" trait may easily reduce women to nurturing, making women automatically equal to nurturance. Furthermore, to glorify femininity in its complementary role, without revising masculinism, is confine femininity to a complementary position. Though feminine virtues are now valued, they remain mere complements to support the traditional masculinist traits. It is hence questionable how this complementary role of femininity can lead to the liberation of women.

The third model, of setting femininity against masculinism, is also unacceptable. Feminine virtues, instead of masculinist virtues such as rationality, are now set as the "human ideal" for both sexes (Plumwood, 1990, p. 223). This is problematical since this will result in a reversal of the dualism. Rationality, which is previously set as "human ideal" is now devalued, resulting in a reverse hierarchal dualism of emotion/

mind. Furthermore, since femininity is set opposite masculinity as altruistic, or denying oneself to serve others interest, it is questionable of how such femininity can stand alone.

The fourth model is not practical at all, as the rejection of both masculinity and femininity destroys all the groundings of ecofeminism.

If, as Plumwood makes clear, all these possible relations between femininity and masculinity are problematical, it is uniquely questionable how ecofeminism can advance an alternative based on “feminine” values. What do Eisler’s proposed “alternative” or King’s “a different kind of culture and politics” really mean? It seems that what Eisler suggests is the second model. In light of Plumwood’s analysis, it is unclear how the partnership model can create a world that “women and men lived in harmony with one another and nature”, without reducing women to mere complementary roles (Eisler, 1990, p. 25). While it is undeniable that the matriarchal society provides a possible revision of the masculinist model, it is unclear and unknown how exactly this “alternative” responds to the current masculinist model.

Moreover, regardless of these unresolved questions of how to posit femininity in relation to masculinity, the notion of femininity on which the “alternative” is grounded is in fact even more problematical.

To reevaluate femininity and make it the ground of an alternative requires a stable

and clear notion of femininity. Yet, it is unclear what femininity genuinely is (Plumwood, 1990). Femininity is never clearly explained in ecofeminist literature. To the extent it is clarified, femininity is associated with virtues like nurturance, motherhood, childcare and love. Yet, it remains unclear what grounds these feminine virtues or of what exactly these feminine virtues refer to. As Plumwood quotes Christiane Makward, femininity is, in fact, something “not to be defined” (1990, p. 223).

While, many ecofeminists thus leave femininity undefined, some ecofeminists resort to biological determinism to find a possible grounding for femininity. As such, femininity can be concretely defined by what females biologically “develop and display” (Plumwood, 1990, p. 226). This is apparent in Salleh, for example, who continues to rely on biological determinism while many other feminists shy away from essentialism. Unsurprisingly, it is such biological determinism that ecofeminism is always being criticized for (Plumwood, 1990; Zimmerman, 1984; Sandilands, 1999; Biehl, J. 1991; Cuomo, 1998).

Biological determinism aside, it is doubtful whether a reference to femininity can avoid essentializing and universalizing “women” or “women experience”. Given that the experience developed in women varies from different nations and circumstances, what really constitutes femininity is highly contention.¹³ Thus, though the women-

nature connection is considered central to ecofeminism, it is also difficult, if not impossible, to establish it on defensible grounds and make it the foundation of an alternative to the masculinist model of women- nature relationship. Herein lies a major impasse for ecofeminism.

This impasse is clearly discernible in Plumwood's work. Though Plumwood (1990) spells out the problems of identifying femininity and positing femininity as an alternative to the masculinist model, she seems unable to overcome the problems to establish a viable ground for ecofeminism's claims. Hence at the end of her essay, Plumwood writes, "a *different* concept of closeness to nature from the traditional one has to be invoked" (Plumwood, 1990, p. 232). What this thesis offers is precisely such a *different* account of self/ nature relationship to ecofeminism. As I argue in chapter three, the specific self/ nature relationship found in Wang Wei's object- oriented poems brings new light to the issues in both deep ecology and ecofeminism. However, before discussing the self/ nature relationship found in Wang's object- oriented poems, we have to analyze the specific self/ nature relationship in deep ecology and ecofeminism in the next chapter. And we will see that since Plumwood also cannot escape these unsolved problems of ecofeminism's grounding of women- nature (Evans, 1993), she drops the usual grounding of women- nature in her proposed self/ nature relationship, leaving this account of self without ground.

Chapter two Self/ nature relationships: Self Realization and the relational self

In the previous chapter, we have gone through the main ideas of deep ecology and ecofeminism, examining how the two ideologies differ in reading the term “anthropocentrism”. To recapitulate, ecofeminism deems deep ecology’s reading of the term anthropocentrism as viewing non-humans as mere instruments too “shallow”. To ecofeminism, deep ecology fails to recognize the dualistic structure behind this instrumentalism, and the relations between all oppressions. Following from this criticism, ecofeminism also finds deep ecology’s proposed self/ nature relationship based on the principle of Self Realization masculinist, as the chapter will show.

While the previous chapter focuses on the problems and causes of environmental discussion, this chapter focuses on the “solution” to “anthropocentrism”. Deep ecology and ecofeminism have proposed two different accounts of self/ nature relationship to re- connect human (self) to nature, namely, Self Realization proposed by deep ecology and relational self proposed by ecofeminism. This chapter will look into the details of these two self/ nature relationships, and see how and why Self Realization is being criticized by ecofeminism as masculinist. At the end of this chapter, we will also discuss how the unsolved problems of the women- nature grounding discussed at the end of the previous chapter remain problematical in

ecofeminism's relational self.

Deep ecology's resolution to the problem of anthropocentrism

After identifying anthropocentrism as a problem, deep ecology suggests a non-anthropocentric self/ nature relationship in response. This non- anthropocentric way of thinking includes two concepts, the relational total field and bioegalitarianism, which set human in relation to nature and acknowledge the intrinsic value of nature. Based on these two concepts, Self Realization is the proposed means to achieve a non- anthropocentric human- nature relationship.

Self Realization is a new communicative model between human and nature. It is "a process of self-examination in which people come to understand themselves as part of a greater whole". (DesJardins, 1993, p.225) According to Naess (1989, 1993), in the western process of the maturity of self, human undergoes development from ego, to social ego, and finally to metaphysical self. Nature is excluded in the whole process. What Naess wants to do is to bring nature back in, overcome alienation, and go beyond this western isolated self. To achieve this aim, Naess proposes Self Realization. Self Realization can be best explained by an example put forward by Naess. Naess (1995) describes how he saw a dying flea and found the death struggle of the flea under microscope extremely expressive. He empathized with the flea. He

felt sorrow for it and felt its pain. What is working behind his compassions and empathy is the process of identification. Through identifying with the flea, Naess felt the pain and sorrow of the flea. Identification links Naess and the flea together. Naess saw himself in the flea. The flea becomes a part of himself, so he can feel its pain and struggle. This is Self Realization for Naess. Through identifying with non-humans, humans come to realize their intrinsic relations to the identified entities, and the fact that humans and non-humans are related within the same whole field (that is, the relational total field). When we come to realize our relations with more and more non-humans, we can go beyond the western narrow and isolated self. It is because we will no longer see ourselves as isolated, but realize the fact that we are a part of the greater whole. This is the reason why Naess and many deep ecologists stress strongly a broader sense of identification. Self Realization does not aim at a limited human self, but the greater whole. Hence, Naess uses Self (with a capital S) to signify the greater whole, and self (with a small s) to signify the limited human self.

According to deep ecology, through identification one can come to realize the intrinsic value of the non-humans. When Naess identifies with the flea, the flea is neither an instrument nor a mere matter to him, but a living being with its own intrinsic value. The dying flea has the same equal right to live as humans. When we identify with non-humans, we realize that they, too, are living beings with intrinsic

values. To realize non- humans as separate beings, and at the same time recognize our relations with them, humans need to position themselves as a part of the greater whole. “By identifying with greater wholes, we partake in the creation and maintenance of this whole” (Naess, 1989, p. 173). The process of identification is to see through the interconnectedness between human and non-humans, to see ourselves in the non-humans. When we see the greater whole as a part of us, we will protect and drive for non-humans’ interest as if we protect our own interests. “We seek what is best for ourselves, but through the extension of the self, our ‘own’ best is also that of others” (Naess, 1989, p. 175). The interest of the greater whole now becomes our own interest. And, if we harm others, we harm ourselves. Identification is not limited to living beings.

Fox (1995) further elaborates Naess’s concept of Self-Realization into transpersonal ecology. As Fox puts it, there are three different bases of identification, “personally based identification”, “ontologically based identification”, and “cosmologically based identification” (p.136, 137). Personally based identification refers to the common experiences brought by personal involvement with other entities. We tend to identify with entities which we always contact with, like family and pets. The identification is not limited to living entities but even to non-living entities, for instance the football club. When we identify with these entities, we see them as a part

of us. In contrast, ontological and cosmological identification are transpersonal. Ontological based identification is the “realization of the fact *that* things are” (Fox, 1995, p. 137). Ontological based identification is to recognize, appreciate and respect the existence of the non-human entities. This identification not only respects and admits the intrinsic value of the non humans, but also respects non-humans’ existence. To put it simply, ontological based identification is to realize and respect that non-humans exist within the same total field with humans. Cosmological based identification is to realize that “we and all other entities are aspects of a single unfolding reality” (Fox, p. 139). That is, to realize that we and all other entities are a whole unity. Fox elaborates with an example of science. Science has been wrongly taken anthropocentrically, as a means for human’s manipulation, prediction and control of nature. From a cosmological perspective, science provides an account of the complexities, diversity and interconnectedness of the greater whole. Science helps us to realize that humans and non-humans are in the same greater whole. To Fox, ontological and cosmological based identification are of higher significance than personally based identification. It is because the personally based identification is limited to our personal contacts, which may trigger possessiveness, war and destruction. In contrast, through identifying with more and more entities, destruction brought by personal emotions can be avoided.

Ecofeminism's criticisms of Self Realization as a masculine sense of self

Self Realization is an attempt to affirm both relatedness and the intrinsic value of nature. Relatedness (or in ecofeminism's word, continuity) and the intrinsic value of nature are both important undeniably. Yet, what deep ecology fails to recognize as equally important is the notion of difference. Failing to address difference between human and nature, Self Realization becomes an attempt of homogenization and incorporation (Plumwood, 1991, 1993, 2002).

The problems of incorporation and homogenization are more explicit in Fox's transpersonal account of deep ecology. As Fox puts it, "there is no firm ontological divide in the field of existence...the world simply is not divided up into independently existing subjects and objects, nor is there any bifurcation in reality between the human and non-human realms" (2003, p. 255). The transpersonal account of deep ecology rejects boundaries and refuses to admit the independence of other entities, aiming at a total subsumption of all beings, where nothing exist on their own, but inter-connected and are inter-related. To Plumwood, the obliteration of the human/ nature boundaries in Fox's account of Self Realization neglects the difference between nature and human. As argued in chapter one, to escape from dualism, both continuity and difference have to be acknowledged. The problem of Self Realization lies in deep ecology's failure to recognize both continuity and difference, resulting in

homogenization and incorporation. In failing to differentiate human from a Coca Cola bottle, for instance, deep ecology homogenizes human and nature. It focuses too overwhelmingly on the alienation between human and non-humans and fails to acknowledge and respect non-humans as an “other” (Plumwood 1993, 2002). On this basis, ecofeminism criticizes deep ecology as masculinist.

This problem of incorporation of Self Realization can be attributed to deep ecology’s insensitivity to the issue of “speaking for the other” (Plumwood, 1997, p. 349). Self Realization simply assumes that the best of human interests are also non-humans’ best interests. This ignores the fact that human is the only moral agent, non-humans cannot speak. Deep ecology’s Self Realization is in fact an attempt to speak for the non-humans, representing non-humans to drive for their best interests. Yet, Self Realization’s “speaking for the other” is highly problematical since the non-humans are homogenized and incorporated, being assimilated to speak. Importantly, we should note the difference between being unable to speak and being assimilated to speak. Being unable to speak is not necessarily problematical. Though non-humans are unable to speak, non-humans as subjects and distinct entities in relation to human may still be respected. (This will be further illustrated by ecofeminism’s relational self.) In contrast, being assimilated to speak is problematical as non-humans as an “other” is not acknowledged and respected, but merely

subsumed. To represent others by incorporating them into one's speaking self results in an aggrandizement of self. Self Realization's encompassing all other's interests thus becomes an excuse to widen self's interests (Plumwood, 1991, 1993, 1997).¹⁴

Then, how should we position human when "speaking for the others", especially with reference to Self Realization? To recall, Self Realization aims at, first, re-asserting the intrinsic value of nature, and second, driving for nature's best interests. Yet, human perspectives, including values and moral judgments, are inescapable and undeniable. Only human is the moral agent (Curtin, 1995; Cuomo 1998). It is after all human who claims that nature has intrinsic values. It is human who claims and defines the standard of the "best interests" of nature. Human position and human judgment of interests cannot be completely eliminated from this process of identification. A total detachment of human concerns and interests are simply impossible. However, there is a real difference between incorporating others to speak and speaking for others while at the same time critically reviewing the speaker's standpoint. As Plumwood (1997, 2002) proposes, self criticism or consciousness of the inevitable human perspective makes a major difference. Though a human perspective is inevitable, it does not necessarily lead to incorporation and homogenization. By being conscious of the act of "speaking for the others" and recognizing the others as distinct entities, incorporation and homogenization may be

avoided even if the inevitable human perspective remains. This can explain why difference is of such importance in ecofeminism's criticism of Self Realization. Self Realization is criticized not for "speaking for the others", but for assimilating others to speak, and hence maintaining masculinist domination.

A "feminine" sense of self and its problems

In critiquing deep ecology's formulation of Self Realization, ecofeminists gesture toward the advancement of a different self/ nature model that is implicitly based on a "feminine" sense of self, or the relational self. Yet, while much has been written on the relational self, there is little elaboration or clarification of how such a self offers a different understanding of the self-nature relation or how it relates to the women-nature connection.

To understand a "feminine" sense of self, we have to understand its implicit opposite, the masculine sense of self. In fact, men establish their sense of self through denying and mastering nature. On the contrary, female's concept of self is devalued with nature (Kheel, 1990). Kheel bases her argument on Dorothy Dinnerstein's explanation of the masculine self. According to Dinnerstein, boys cannot distinguish themselves from their mothers during infancy and see themselves as part of their mothers. Mother is the center of an infant's world. An infant contacts the world

through its mother. As long as the infant fails to articulate the boundaries as an individual, mother is part of nature, an integral part of the surroundings. Mother's body is the source of food, she is also a mini cosmos and the source of life. A boy fails to acquire "I-ness" until his father appears as a complete and separate individual. To acquire the "I-ness", to be cultural and to be a human being, the boy has to devalue and objectify both women and nature. In this process, women and nature are homogenized, incorporated and instrumentalized, resulting in a subject- object relationship. The masculine sense of self in Kheel's account refers to such a self realized through this denial and exclusion.

Against this masculinist sense of self, Plumwood proposes a "self-in-relationship", or the relational self to re-accentuate continuity and difference (1993, p. 154). The relational self consists of two different parts; one part mainly affirms continuity to counter hyperseparation, while the other affirms difference to counter incorporation.

For the first part in affirming continuity, relatedness and interdependence is addressed. In the masculinist model, male is positioned at the center while female is supposed to forgo her own interests to fulfill male interests. Needs and interests of the subordinates are totally neglected. In contrast, the relational self proposed by Plumwood is a "non-instrumental mode" (Plumwood, 1993, p. 155; 1991). In this

relational self, needs and interests of humans and non- humans are not separated but interdependent. Both interests are involved. For instance, a mother hoping for a child's recovery does so for the child's sake as well as for her own sake, since the child's recovery will bring happiness to the mother. Here, the interests of the mother are not isolated, but are rather dependent on and related to that of others, who, in this case, is the child. As such, neither the mother nor the child has to forgo their own interests to fulfill the others as the instrumental mode of self requires. The needs and interests of self and others are inter-related and simultaneously taken into account.

In highlighting the interdependence and inter-relatedness of interests, the non-instrumental mode of self counters the masculinist model. Plumwood suggests bringing this non-instrumental mode to the self/ nature relation by re-accentuating the values of "dependency and relatedness [which] have been strongly denied in the instrumental model" (1993, p. 154). The values of dependency and relatedness counter the dualistic model of self/ nature relation by emphasizing continuity between the two. Neither the self nor non-humans are subordinated. The non-humans are not seen as commodities which can be abandoned or utilized anytime for human's own sake. As the interests and needs of humans and non-humans are interdependent, they simultaneously take care for their own sakes. Thus, hyperseparation is overcome.

Yet, even if hyperseparation can, in principle, be overcome, it is unclear from the

ecofeminist account how we can reach this continuity. It is also unclear by what means we can take both interests into account without privileging either. It is even more unclear how this non-instrumental model can actually work in the self/ nature relationship. The non- instrumental model in Plumwood outlined contains mere principles about taking the interests of both self and others into account. She is vague about how the dependency and relatedness affirmed in the non-instrumental mode are applicable to the self/ nature relationship.

The mother- child example given by Plumwood is even more confusing, yet also revealing. If Plumwood had highlighted the mother- child relationship as an ideal model for human/ nature relationship, then it would have been clear that her conception of the non-instrumental mode of self is grounded on this relationship. Instead, throughout her arguments, the mother- child relation is cited as a mere example illustrating the relational self. In citing the mother- child relation only as an example, Plumwood apparently does not intend to establish a direct relationship between motherhood and the non- instrumental mode of self. She also makes no attempt to establish a clear and concrete women- nature connection, as many ecofeminists do. What she clearly pinpoints in her arguments is the twin oppressions of women and nature, but she does not specify a women- nature connection. Interestingly, this does not mean she thinks the issue of women- nature connection

unimportant either. On the contrary, as discussed in chapter two, to Plumwood, the “woman/ nature connection can’t just be set aside” (1990, p. 214). That Plumwood says little about the connection of women- nature while believing this connection to be really important suggests a conundrum. Apparently, though Plumwood recognizes the importance of the women- nature connection, she also recognizes fundamental problems in establishing this connection. As I have described, the women- nature connection is highly problematical. It is unclear how to define “femininity” and how a revaluation of this “femininity” can liberate all women, men and nature. It is precisely because Plumwood recognizes these problems that she refrains from grounding the relational self on a women- nature connection base, leaving the relational self without any grounds. It is also because of this reason that she never names the relational self as “feminine”.

This vagueness continues in the second part of Plumwood’s relational self. This part deals with the necessity of recognizing difference to counter the problems of incorporation and homogenization. What the relational self suggests is to affirm difference through interactions. Through interactions, including resistance from others, the others as different and distinct subjects are recognized. For instance, a child may want the mother to stay with him while the mother disappoints her and leaves to work. Through this interaction, the child comes to realize the mother as a separate and

different subject, who makes decision as the child does. The mother is not an object like a toy which the child can manipulate as he or she wants, but another “center of subjectivity”, who is different from and in relation to himself or herself (Plumwood, 1993, p. 159). Interaction is going two-sidedly. Not only is the child influenced by the mother’s will, but the mother is also influenced by the child’s act and will. The child is no longer the mother’s “object” or “possession”. The child may act and grow differently from the mother’s desire and expectation. As such, relations are not defined by excluding and denying the others, but through mutual interactions. The others as distinct subjects are recognized. Relations are established between two subjects, instead of subject- object. In this way, continuity and difference are both acknowledged.

This example describes the interaction between two subjects, between two human beings. What Plumwood proposes in the relational self is to bring this interaction between two subjects into the human/ nature relationship. As she notes, the subject- subject interaction is not limited to relation between humans, it is also possible between humans and non-humans. For example, it is not surprising to find interactions and communication between human and young animals (Plumwood, 1993). Nor is it difficult to find that the forest will respond immediately when human beings plant something new. However, Plumwood does not explain in details how

exactly the interactions between humans and non-humans help human to recognize and respect non-humans as subjects. It is also unclear how humans and non-humans can really interact. Nevertheless, the point to be highlighted here is the respect and recognition of non-humans as subjects and as distinct entities. To Plumwood, given the inevitable human perspective and the fact that non-humans are non-speaking entities, it is imperative that non-humans are recognized and respected as subjects. Only through such interaction can we avoid the problems of subsumption and incorporation (Plumwood, 1993, 2002).

Interestingly, Self Realization can also be a kind of relational self. As Plumwood notes, Naess has also acknowledged the importance of empathy and care in Self-Realization. Indeed, Self Realization aims at taking care of non-humans' interests and establishing continuity between humans and non-humans. Such care and empathy may also imply interactions between humans and non-humans. Yet, the unnecessary holism and subsumption of others in Self Realization shortchange the relation. Once Self Realization acknowledges the importance of recognizing difference, it can become a version of the relational self (Plumwood, 1993). In other words, the two self/ nature relationship models are not completely incompatible (Warren, 1999).

In sum, as Plumwood (1993) states clearly, "[s]uch a non-instrumental conception of relationship to the other, although not yet a full account of ecological

selfhood, is an important ingredient in such an account” (Plumwood, 1993, p.156).

Yet, many details of the relational self remain unclear and need further clarification.

In particular, it is unclear by what means this relational self can be implemented.

Though ecofeminism’s “women- nature connection” may provide a strong basis for the relational self, insofar as this women- nature connection is itself on shaky grounds, linking the relational self to the women- nature connection seems far from helpful.

Hence, unless the problems of women- nature connection described in chapter one are solved, the relational self remains only “an important ingredient” of a self/ nature alternative.

What I want to suggest in this thesis is that the self in Wang Wei’s object-oriented landscape poetry brings in a new perspective that helps to address this problem of the relational self. In the following chapter, we will examine the terms of the self/ nature relations in Wang’s poetry, and discuss how they contribute to a plausible grounding of the relational self.

Chapter three the self/ nature relation in Wang's object- oriented poems

In the previous chapter, we note that, to ecofeminism, Self Realization is still masculinist as it fails to acknowledge the importance of difference even though this overlooking of difference results in homogenization and incorporation of non-humans. Self Realization simply fails to respect non-humans as “an other”, as separate entities. In contrast, the relational self proposed by ecofeminism seeks to affirm both continuity and difference. Yet, though it seems that the relational self succeeds in affirming both, it is unclear by what means we can arrive at this relational self. As Plumwood recognizes the problems in grounding a women- nature connection, she refrains from establishing an explicit connection between the relational self and the women- nature connection, leaving the relational self without grounds. To suggest a way out of this impasse, this chapter analyzes specific self/ nature relationships found in Wang Wei's object- oriented landscape poetry. As I will show, the self/ nature relationship found in Wang Wei's object- oriented poems can help us to address the respective problems of Self Realization and the relational self.

Landscape poetry is a representation of the human/ nature relationship in a literary form. It represents the experience and interaction between human and nature. Chinese landscape poetry, in particular, is famous for representing a coherent human/

nature relationship. For this reason, analyzing the relation between humans and non-humans depicted in Chinese landscape poems may help to bring new insights to environmental debates in the west. It is no coincidence that W. H. Yip, a leading figure in decoding Chinese landscape poetry, analyzes and discusses environmental issues in his latest book ([叶] 2002).

Yip's earlier writings ([葉] 1980, 1991) give an insightful analysis of the relation between the poet and the represented "objects" (non-humans) in Chinese poetry. He suggests that there are two important ways in which Chinese poetry portrays the relationship between the poet and the objects. The first way is to project the poet's intellectual thinking on the non-humans, transforming the non-humans into concepts. The second way in portraying the poet/ object relationship is to return freedoms to the objects. That is, the poet "has stepped aside" from the dominant position and the objects appear in an "unhindered" way (Yip, 1997, p. 98; p. 99). This analysis offers an illuminating framework for discussing the self/ nature relation in Wang Wei's landscape poems. Following Yip's accounts, we are able to see how the poet, or the self in the poems, relates to the non-humans in Wang's landscape poems. Most pertinent to our discussion at hand is the self/ nature relation in Wang's object-oriented landscape poems. In these poems, the self relates to nature in a way that escapes the problems of masculinism ecofeminists criticized in *Self Realization*,

paralleling ecofeminism's relational self, yet without assuming a problematic women-nature connection. The poems thus suggest a third alternative of self-nature relation that addresses the problem of both deep ecology's Self Realization and ecofeminism's relational self.

In the long history of Chinese landscape poems, Wang Wei's landscape poetry has unsurpassed significance. His poems "characterize[d] much of the poetry of high tang", which was unquestionably the heyday of landscape poetry (Yu, 1987, p. 186; Owen, 1981). His usage of the parallel couplet, the balance of form, the style of simplicity, and the hidden subject of the poet in presenting the objects, all surpass his predecessors in Early Tang, and were imitated by poets in the later centuries. As Owen (1981) comments, "Wang Wei has a strong claim to having been considered the greatest poet of the day" (p. 36). While Wang Wei's contribution to the development of the Chinese landscape poetry in general is undeniable, what is most significant for this thesis is the specific self/nature relationship found in Wang Wei's object-oriented landscape poetry. Wang Wei, who was a devoted Buddhist, demonstrated a special inclination to Buddhism in his poetry, which is clearly discernible in the unique self/nature relationship in his landscape poetry. It is no coincidence that Wang Wei has been called "Shi Fo" (詩佛, the Poet Buddha), for his blending of Buddhism into his object-oriented landscape poetry is distinctive. Buddhist terminologies like Sunyata

(emptiness) and meditation suffuse in these poems, but the poems are by no means religious poems, as they do not include any doctrines. Rather, these are landscape poems integrated with Wang Wei's understanding of Buddhism, especially the concept of Sunyata (Jang [張], 2001; Zhang [章], 1997; Xiao [蕭], 1997; Jiang [姜], 1992; Chiou [邱], 1992). It is this Buddhist element that particularly characterizes Wang Wei's poetry as unique and special. And it is this interesting relationship with Buddhism that demonstrates a valuable and unique self/ nature relationship that can contribute to resolving the respective problems of deep ecology and ecofeminism.

Specifically, poems written in Wang Wei's later years of life when he was actively practicing Buddhism, such as the Wang River Collection (輞川集), demonstrate his highest achievement in Chinese landscape poetry. The chosen poems in the thesis are all from this period. Though only a small part of Wang's entire oeuvre, they epitomize his special achievement in Chinese landscape poetry, and illustrate its well specific conception of the self/ nature relationship. Though the poems were composed in a different context than that of the debate between deep ecology and ecofeminism, the inter-connected and multi- causal human (self)/ nature relationships depicted therein provide an interesting and insightful account of an interrelated and non- masculinist self/ nature relation that brings new light to the problems of deep ecology and ecofeminism.

Ambiguities

Yip's [葉] (1980, 1991) reading of Chinese poems outlines a basic structure of self/ nature relation which provides a useful starting point for our discussion.¹⁵ Yip [葉] proposes two ways in which Chinese poetry portrays the relationship between the poet and the objects — the poet-centric (the original Chinese as 由我觀物) and object-centric (the original Chinese as 以物觀物) (1980, p. 246; see also [王] Wang , G.Z.,1986). Poet-centric refers to the exertion of personal perspectives upon the non-humans. The poet gives a clear and explicit indication of the meaning of the objects. Readers are led to follow the poet's intention and explanation. Non-humans are perceived and delineated through ideas and intellectual knowledge and are being transformed into concepts. That is, the self (the poet) puts his or her own explanation and meanings upon the non-humans.¹⁶ The meanings of non-humans are understood according to the poet's indication. In contrast, object- oriented refers to the refraining of the poet from playing an active role in the poems. That is to say, the poet minimizes his or her own influence upon non-humans. Instead of standing as a master to the non-humans, the poet minimizes his or her presence and submerges into the scene of non-humans. Non-humans exist as if free from human's intervention, or, as Yu quotes Yip, viewing "things as things view themselves" (1987, p. 199).

Because of a clear and overt indication in the poem, the poet- centric

representation tends to suggest a clear and linear causal relation, and strike a critical, analytical, and logical tone. In comparison, the object-oriented representation tends to free non-humans from human intellectual knowledge, trying to avoid “intervention” and be passive. This passivity of the poet always leads to ambiguities and uncertainties in the poem which make room for non-humans to present themselves. The following three poems by Wang Wei illustrate such passivity.

“Deer Enclosure” (鹿柴)¹⁷

| | |
|--------|---|
| 空山不見人。 | Empty mountain: no human is seen. |
| 但聞人語聲。 | But voices of humans are heard. |
| 返景入深林。 | Sun's reflection reaches into the woods |
| 復照青苔上。 | And shines upon the green moss. |

“Bamboo Lodge” (竹里館)¹⁸

| | |
|--------|--|
| 獨坐幽篁裏。 | Sitting alone among dark bamboos, |
| 彈琴復長嘯。 | Playing the zither and whistle loud again. |
| 深林人不知。 | Grove so deep, human do not know. |
| 明月來相照。 | The bright moon comes to shine. |

“Visiting the Temple of Gathered Fragrance” (過香積寺)¹⁹

| | |
|--------|--|
| 不知香積寺。 | Not knowing the Temple of Gathered Fragrance, |
| 數里入雲峰。 | Miles and miles into cloud-peaks. |
| 古木無人徑。 | Ancient trees, paths without people; |
| 深山何處鐘。 | Deep in the mountains, where is the bell? |
| 泉聲咽危石。 | Noise from the spring swallows up lofty rocks; |
| 日色冷青松。 | The color of the sun chills green pines. |
| 薄暮空潭曲。 | Toward dusk by the curve of an empty pond, |
| 安禪制毒龍。 | Peaceful meditation controls poison dragons. |

These are poems exemplifying the object-oriented representation. The three poems are full of ambiguities and uncertainties. The ambiguities and uncertainties arise from the poet's refraining from claiming a dominating center position to the non-humans. Many different ways of reading the non-humans are preserved²⁰ (Yip, 1997b). Note the ambiguities in these three poems. For instance, in the first line of the poem “Deer Enclosure”, “no human is seen” entails the absence of human. The word “empty” further denotes the unpopulatedness of the mountain. Yet, in the second line of the poem, the echo of human indicates the presence of human. The presence of human, then, becomes paradoxical (Wang, [王] C. S., 1999). We do not know if there are

really any humans in the empty mountain, since the human voices may not denote the actual presence of human, but, rather, refer to the poet's memory and imagination (Yu, 1987). Likewise, in the third line of "Bamboo Lodge", the reference for the phrase "no one knows" is unknown. Both the subject and object of the phrase "no one knows" are unclear. It is unclear who/ what "do not know" what. The object may refer to the grove. Or it may be the presence of human that is not known (Yu, 1980, 1987). It is also unclear who "human" in the line refers to. It may refer to the poet, or others we do not know. Similarly, in the fourth line, it is unknown what/ who the moon is shining on. The moon may shine on the poet, or other non-humans present in the grove. It is non-specific and not clarified.

The poem "Visiting the Temple of Gathered Fragrance" is another very good example. It is a poem of ignorance. The whole poem depicts a journey leading to the Temple of Gathered Fragrance. It is a journey full of unknown, ignorance and unexpectedness (Yu, 1980; Wang, [王] C. S., 1999; Tau, [陶] 1991). The first line of the poem is highly ambiguous. It is uncertain of what Wang does not know. It may mean that the poet does not know the location of the temple, or the poet does not know the Temple of Gathered Fragrance. The second and third lines are also ambiguous. The phrase entering "into cloud-peaks" may refer to the road to the temple, or the location of the temple. The third line can be interpreted as either paths without

people, or as “no path for people” (Yu, 1980, p. 127). The failure to attribute the location of the bell ring further accentuates the uncertainties of the poem. The description of the later part of the poem, including the lofty rocks, spring, green pines and pond, are all displaced. We cannot attribute the location of these entities. No indication is provided to understand these entities in relation and connection with the temple. The one who is practicing the meditation cannot be confirmed. It may refer to the monk, or to the poet himself (Yu, 1980). The poet does not exert an overt indication and explanation to the poems, hence resulting in ambiguities and uncertainties. These ambiguities and uncertainties are important for freeing non-humans from the poet’s intellectual intervention.

As Yu notes, the status of “do not know” may refer to the fact that Wang Wei “does not possess a rational knowledge of its significance but rather an intuitive, nondifferentiating awareness” (1980, p. 127). The poet does not assume the dominating position to interpret nature. Human (the poet) is not omnipresent. Human also “does not know”. The “does not know” in the poems suggest that human’s intellectual knowledge is not imposed on non-humans, that these poems are not the result of rational thinking and analysis, but an intuitive recognition and appreciation of nature (Yu, 1980, 1987; Fu[傳], 1999; Yip [葉], 1980; 1972). Wang never intends to analyze or to preach in the landscape poetry. This is why an overt indication is

utterly missing in the poems. The poet does not intend to impose rational and intellectual knowledge upon non-humans either. The unknown and uncertainties in “Bamboo Lodge”, “Deer Enclosure” and “Visiting the Temple of Gathered Fragrance” can be attributed to the same reason. The vagueness in these poems represents Wang’s consciousness of the limitations of rational cognition (Yu, 1980). As Yu comments (1980), the ignorance in the poem “Visiting the Temple of Gathered Fragrance” is extremely important. It is precisely because of this ignorance that every twist of the journey, such as the sudden appearance of the temple and the bell ring, becomes unexpected and surprising. Wang frees himself from any mental calculation of the road. He lets himself lead by nature, and “proceeds without intentions” (Yu, 1980, p.50). This ignorance is further illuminated and initiated by the phrase “do not know” in the first line. Ambiguities and uncertainties are of such importance that they prevent the poet from being active and assuming the dominating center. It is under this understanding that, as Yu puts it, the non-humans emerge “without being contaminated by intellectuality” (1987, p. 199). It is under these understanding that the poems are “pure experience” (Yip, 1972, p. ix), that non-humans are being represented in their “purest form” (Yip, 1997b, p. 13. see also Yip[葉], 1991; Wang, G.Z. [王], 1986; Yu, 1987; Barnstone 1991). Non-humans are being free from human interference. Non-humans are not being distorted by human intellectual.

Non-humans in Wang's object- oriented poems and the ineliminable human perspective

As discussed in the previous chapter, human's influence and perspective cannot be completely eliminated from the identification of nature. Nature is a human construction. Yet, there is a difference between the non-humans found in Wang's object- oriented poems and the "non-humans" we discussed in the last chapter. It is undeniable that nature is a human concept and nature in Wang's poems is also not an "objective existence" (Wang, Z.Q. [王], 2003). As Liu puts it precisely, "[p]oetry is an embodiment of the poet's contemplation of the world and of his own mind" (1966, p. 49). It is undeniable that "Deer Enclosure" and "Bamboo Lodge", being poems of the Wang River Collection (輞川集), are part of the records of Wang's retreat life in Wang River valley. Likewise, "Visiting Temple of Gathered Fragrance" is a record of the journey to the temple. They are all records of the poet's experience with nature. Nonetheless, human perspective in Wang's object- oriented poems is largely minimized. Non-humans in Wang's object- oriented poems are not subsumed into rational and intellectual knowledge. Freedoms are returned to non-humans. There is no fixed or logical interpretation for the non-humans in the poems described above, in contrast to the poet- centric representation, which encodes non-humans into preconceived orders and human perspectives.

Here, a comparison of human- nature relation in the poet- centric poems with that in Self Realization is instructive. Both impose meanings and personal perspectives onto non- humans, resulting in incorporation and homogenization. This is precisely why ecofeminism criticizes Self Realization for aggrandizing the self in subsuming the others. Accordingly, once deep ecology recognizes the powerful and unavoidable human perspective imposed on non-humans, it may reformulate the notion of Self Realization to address ecofeminism's criticism. This is arguably what Wang's object- oriented landscape poems have achieved over the poet- centric. As Yu, following Yip, states:

[t]he writer gives 'paramount importance to the acting-out of visual objects and events, letting them explain themselves by their coexisting, coextensive emergence from nature, letting the spatial tensions reflect conditions and situations rather than coercing these objects and events into some preconceived artificial orders by sheer human interpretive elaboration. (Yu, 1980, p. 198)

Ambiguities and uncertainty play a really significant role here. They enable the non-humans to be represented in their "purest form", returning freedoms to the non-humans and eliminating the human perspective to the largest extent possible (Yip, 1980, 1991; Yu's, 1997b). In this sense, though human intervention is inevitable, the influence of the ineliminable human perspective is minimized. Nature is no longer

simply incorporated and assimilated.

The self in Wang's object- oriented poems

The minimization of human perspective is largely due to the passivity of the poet. In the object- oriented poems, the poet deletes the concreteness of the self (Yip, 1991; Wang, G.Z. [王], 1986). That is, the poet is not present as a concrete and explicit narrator or a dominating center explaining the non-humans. As I will show, the poet's passivity is the prerequisite for the interdependent and multi-causal relation between human and non-humans in Wang's object- oriented poems. And this deleting of the concreteness of the self can be first demonstrated by the absence of subjects in Wang's object- oriented poems.

As discussed, the poet is hidden in Wang's object- oriented poems. The poet is not present as a narrator in the poems (Wang, G.Z. [王], 1986; Barnstone 1991, Owen, 1981). The subjects (pronouns) are missing in the object- oriented poems. We understand the presence of the poet, not through the poet presented as a subject or a narrator, nor through the use of personal pronouns. Rather, we recognize the presence of the poet through the use of verbs in the poems (Barnstone, 1991). The words "hear" and "see" in "Deer Enclosure" denote the act of a human. Similarly, the word "sitting" in "Bamboo Lodge" denotes the presence of human. The poem "Visiting

Temple of Gathered Fragrance” itself denotes the presence of the poet as heading towards the Temple. The missing subject in these poems is extremely significant in that it deletes the concreteness of the poet. The poems are the experience of the poet, like sitting in the Bamboo Lodge, mediating in Deer Enclosure and traveling to the Temple of Gathered Fragrance. Yet, as Yip ([葉], 1991) argues, the missing subject frees the poems from being a singular and specific experience of one person. A personal pronoun always tends to specify and concretize the presence of the narrator. For instance, compare “Alone I sit amid the dark bamboo” (Yu, 1980, p. 147) with “Sitting alone among dark bamboos”. The personal pronoun “I” specifies the act to one person, the poet. The act of sitting alone becomes concretely the poet’s experience. In contrast, the absent subject frees the poet from being a concrete narrator. Though sitting alone is undeniably a personal experience, the missing subject creates a ambiguous and uncertain narrator. The poet becomes non-substantial, or in Barnstone’s word, the poet “is hidden” (1991, p. li).

It is important to note that the missing subject not only cancels the concreteness of the poet, but also implies the full submergence of the self (Barnstone, 1991; Liu, 1966; Yip[葉], 1980; Wang, G.Z. [王], 1986). As stated clearly by Yip, the missing subject is not a ‘[c]urious habit of mind’, but it is a concept of “losing yourself in the flux of events’ (1997, p.7). The losing of self, the submergence of self, or the stepping

aside of the poet²¹ is to deny the concreteness of self, that is, to recognize human as part of the components of the world.

Before we discuss the meaning of the submergence of self, we have to understand the Zen Buddhist concept of sunyata since sunyata is the background to understand the importance of the losing of self. Sunyata(空) or “emptiness”, is significant as it reveals the fundamental relationship between human/ non-humans, or even between non-humans in Wang’s object- oriented poems (Fu [傅], 1999). It is well known that Wang Wei was a devoted Buddhist. To see Zen Buddhism’s influence in Wang’s poems written in the later part of his life is therefore unexceptional.²²

Traces of Zen Buddhism are indeed discernible in the poems discussed above. Take, for instance, the word “empty” in the first line of “Deer Enclosure”. This word denotes the unpopulatedness of the mountain, at the same time it also denotes the sunyata (空), or “emptiness” of the poet. Sunyata marks the embrace of fullness and nothingness at the same time. Emptiness highlights the “dependent origination” of the world, that is the “interconnected and interdependent structure in the universe” (de Silva, 1998, p. 41). What is implied in the “fullness and nothingness” is the ever-changingness of the world and the impermanence of things. The appearance of one thing is doomed to disappear. This ever-changingness of the world is not controlled by human in any sense. Rather, it is the result of the assembly of various

conditions and factors, which are non-linear, interconnected and interdependent.

Thus, to see things as empty does not mean that one cannot see the things, only seeing them differently. For instance, to say that one sees a table as empty is to say that one recognizes the inherited process of transformation of the table. The formation of the table is the result of the assembly of various conditions and factors. First of all, a piece of wood has to be cut to make a table. The tree, from which the wood comes is dependent on various factors for its growth, like weather and soil. This particular tree has to be chosen to make a table. A designer and the market also have to be taken into account. Finally the person sees this table by chance. The table is not permanent. It will deteriorate and is subject to changes. The deterioration or change of the table, is also subject to various conditions and factors. This is the meaning of seeing the table as empty. Note that, once we see the table as empty, we also recognize that the designer of the table, the wood, the wood-cutter, the weather are all inter-related to a certain extent. The table is, then, the result of uncalculated and unpredictable interconnections. To say that things are empty is to highlight such multi-causal and non-linear relationships.

Emptiness implies an inter-related and multi-causal relation. Therefore, confusion and ambiguities are unavoidable. To claim a clear and simple relationship between human and nature is difficult and impossible. What we can say in the least

sense to this human/ nature relation is that human and nature is fundamentally interdependent and interconnected. Human cannot alter or disrupt the stream of interconnection and inter-relatedness. Human is only a part of them (de Silva, 1998).

If we insist on claiming an independent and concrete selfhood, we forget the fact that the self cannot escape from the streams of impermanence and emptiness. In fact, there is no such thing as a permanent selfhood (Fu[傅], 1999; Yu, 1980; de Silva, 1998; James, 2004). The self is also not concrete. Selfhood is only the result of the assembly of consciousness, feelings and perception (Yip, 1980). When one loses the self, one relocates oneself back into the interconnected self-society-nature matrix. This is what the poet does in Wang's object-oriented poems. The paradoxical presence of the poet in "Deer Enclosure" shows Wang's inclination to "deemphasize the human ego" (Yu, 1987, p. 187). The hidden presence of the poet in "Bamboo Lodge" can be understood in the same light. The poet tries to minimize himself and frees himself from the dominating position. Likewise in "Visiting the Temple of Gathered Fragrance", assumption of complete ignorance frees the poet from calculation to be one with nature. The unknown, unfamiliar road and the reliance on nature to lead make every change and appearance of nature startling and surprising.²³ The poet minimizes the self and remains passive.

It is precisely because of this stepping aside of the poet that the inter-relations

between humans and non-humans are acknowledged. This can be seen in the following two examples.

Magnolia Bank (辛夷塢)²⁴

木末芙蓉花。 On the tips of trees, “lotus” flowers

山中發紅萼。 In the mountains produce red calices.

澗戶寂無人。 A home by a stream, quiet. No one.

紛紛開且落。 Bloom and fall, bloom and fall.

Bird Call Valley (鳥鳴澗)²⁵

人閒桂花落。 Human at leisure, cassia flowers fall.

夜靜春山空。 The night still, spring mountain empty.

月出驚山鳥。 The moon emerges, startling mountain birds:

時鳴春澗中。 At time calling within the spring valley.

In “Magnolia Bank”, the poet does not intervene or disturb the appearance of the lotus flower (Yip [葉], 1980). Though there is neither subject nor verb to indicate the presence of the poet, the poet’s presence is presupposed. The poet remains hidden in the poem. The words “no one” further accentuates the absence of the poet. With such a hidden presence, the poet avoids disrupting the flowers’ presentation. The blossoms

of the flowers are depicted *as if* without the poet's intervention. In "Bird Call Valley", human presence is registered. Yet the word "leisure" highlights the non-intervention and passivity of the poet, or the losing of self.²⁶ The poet is free from intellectual calculation or any business. Significantly, human at leisure and the fall of the flowers forms a causal relationship. It is because human is at leisure that he or she feels and appreciates the fall of the flowers and hears the birds call (Yip, 1980). This is similar to "Deer Enclosure", where the uncertain absence of human is immediately followed by the description of nature (Yu, 1987). This is not a coincidence, but a deliberate structure highlighting that only when the poet is passive can non-humans be represented in their "purest form", and hence their inter-relation. Similarly, in "Visiting the Temple of Gathered Fragrance", because the poet is at leisure, away from a dominating role, he is surprised by the "sudden" appearance of nature. Hence, stepping aside is the pre-requisite and necessary condition for the acknowledgement of the inter- relationship between human and non-humans.

Wang's object- oriented poems thus reveal a strong mutuality between humans and non-humans. The ambiguous presence of the poet in "Bird Call Valley", "Deer Enclosure", "Bamboo Lodge" and "Visiting the Temple of Gathered Fragrance" makes clear that the poet is not the main or sole concern in the poems. Yet, neither are the non-humans (Yu, 1980). The deep grove and bright moon in "Bamboo Lodge"

appear side by side with the poet's zither and whistle. It is how the poet's zither and whistle sounds echo with the deep grove and bright moon that is the main concern of the poem (Yu, 1987). Likewise in "Deer Enclosure", the shining sun shares space with the voices of human. In "Visiting the Temple of Gathered Fragrance", though no human voice is heard, the implied presence of a human creates a picture of "strong mutuality" between humans and non-humans (Yu, 1980, p. 168), creating a "world of harmony and integration" (Yu, 1980, p.1). This coherent whole and harmonious relation forms a "self- nature matrix"²⁷ where human is but one component at one with non-humans in an interrelated web. This interrelated web-like self/ nature relationship is even more explicit when we see non-humans interacting among themselves in Wang's object- oriented poems.

Interactions between non-humans in Wang's object- oriented poems

Non-humans in Wang's poems are active, which can be best explained and demonstrated by the usage of verbs in the poems. For instance, in "Deer Enclosure", the word "shines" suggests the interaction between sun and the green moss. Even more clearly, the words "comes to shine" in "Bamboo Lodge" indicate that the moon takes the initiative. These verbs suggest that non-humans interact with one another. A more explicit example can be found in "Visiting the Temple of Gathered Fragrance"

couplet “Noise from the spring swallows up lofty rocks; The color of the sun chills green pines” (泉聲咽危石。日色冷青松。). In *Visiting the Temple of Gathered Fragrance*, the verb “swallow” and “chill” indicate clearly the action and interaction among the non-humans. “Nature becomes active” (Barnstone, 1991, p. I). The verbs in the poems suggest that not only human but non-humans also “act”. Likewise, in the line “The moon emerges, startling mountain birds” (月出驚山鳥。.) in “*Bird Call Valley*”, the word “emerge” suggests that the emergence of the moon influences, startles the bird.²⁸ A very clear interaction among the non-humans is indicated.

Interactions, then, are not limited to humans; non-humans also interact among themselves. This further re-accentuates the non-dominating role of the poet and complicates the human/ nature relationship. Humans and the non-humans are all knots in the “self- nature matrix”. Within this “self- nature matrix”, interactions take place between humans, between humans and non-humans, and between non-humans themselves. Hence, relationships are not merely formed between human/ human or human/ nature, but also between non- humans/ non- humans. This extends the “self- nature matrix” beyond the limited human/ non-humans perspective; the “self- nature matrix” in fact consists of many layers. The human/ nature relationship is only one of the layers in the “self- nature matrix”. Human is but one of many components in the human/ nature layer, which is also one of the many layers in the “self- nature matrix”.

Based on this argument we can understand the real meaning of the minimization of self in Wang's object- oriented poems. The minimization of self is an attempt to re-position human (or self as an individual) into the "self- nature matrix". This is not simply a human-nature web but a more complex and multi-related web, where humans and non-humans are only two of the important components. Human and non-humans are also one in the "self- nature matrix". By this, I do not mean that there are no differences between them. Interactions among non-humans sufficiently show that non-humans are distinct entities, entities different from humans. What I want to suggest is that humans do not assume a dominating role. Humans and non-humans are different entities (components) in the "self- nature matrix", where all entities are inter-related in a multi- causal way. Human is important only because it provides a necessary position in understanding the "self- nature matrix". And it is this inter-related relationship in Wang's object- oriented poems that responds to both Self Realization and the relational self.

Wang's non- masculinist self and the relational self

Before explaining how the self/ nature relationship in Wang's object- oriented poems responds to both Self Realization and ecofeminist's relational self, I want to clarify some points. First, I am not suggesting that the self account in Wang's object-

oriented poems is the only alternative. Nor am I suggesting that deep ecology or ecofeminism must follow Wang's account of self. All I want to suggest is that the self/nature relationship in Wang's object-oriented poems offers a well-grounded "alternative" understanding that resolves the respective problems in deep ecology's Self Realization and ecofeminism's relational self exposed in the deep ecology/ecofeminism debate.

First, the self in Wang's object-oriented poems does not formulate a problematical dualistic relationship, which continues to inform deep ecology's notion of Self Realization. As shown in the previous chapter, Self Realization has been criticized as being masculinist because of its failure to affirm difference as well as continuity. To ecofeminists, Self Realization succeeds in affirming continuity to counter hyperseparation, but fails to acknowledge the importance of difference in countering incorporation. To affirm difference, one has to respect non-humans as an "other", to realize and respect the agency of non-humans. The self in Wang's object-oriented poems arguably actualizes this respect, hence overcoming the problems of Self Realization. In the non-linear and multi-causal relation in Wang's object-oriented poems, humans (the self) and non-humans co-exist as components in a "self-nature matrix". This humans (self)/nature relation is neither dualistic nor hierarchical. The relation is not established through excluding others, but through recognition of being

one of the components in the inter-related and multi-causal web. Difference is also affirmed in this recognition. Humans do not occupy the dominating center, creating a problematic and dualistic relation with nature. It is in this light that the self in Wang's poems clearly provides a non- masculinist alternative to Self Realization.

At the same time, the self in Wang's object- oriented poems also suggests an alternative grounding of a human- nature relation that resonates with the relational self but escapes its problems. First of all, let us recall ecofeminism's problems of grounding the relational self in a women- nature connection here. Though acknowledged to be important, the women- nature connection is difficult to define and develop for ecofeminism as it entails a definite notion of femininity. It is unclear on what grounds such a femininity can be defined. It is also questionable of what genuine femininity is. Confronting this problem, some ecofeminists resort to biological determinism. Yet, such attempt to ground the women- nature connection on biological determinism is often criticized for universalizing "women" and "femininity". Thus ecofeminism is at an impasse. On the one hand, those ecofeminists who shy away from biological determinism fail to clarify femininity and find a ground for the women- nature connection. On the other hand, those who seek such a grounding in biological determinism suffer from another problems of universalization and essentialism.

Besides these problems of defining femininity and establishing the women-nature connection, it is also questionable how re-valuing femininity can counter masculinism. If feminine virtues are affirmed to complement masculinism (without rejecting masculinism), they remain as more than complements in support of masculinism. If feminine virtues substitutes masculine values, there is only a reversal of the dualistic hierarchy into emotion over mind, leaving the problematical dualistic structure in place. Confronting this problem, Plumwood suggests of finding a third alternative, a different account of closeness to nature that encompasses the dual recognition of continuity and difference in the relational self. The self/ nature account of Wang's object- oriented poems arguably offers such a "third alternative".

Significantly, the self/ nature relationship in Wang's object- oriented poems meets the vision of the relational self in overcoming the problems of dualism. The problems of dualism, which include hyperseparation, homogenization, incorporation and instrumentalism, no longer apply with the affirmation of continuity and difference. In the self/ nature relationship in Wang's object- oriented poems, the accordance of activity to non-humans independent of humans indicates that non-humans are not incorporated and homogenized. Difference is affirmed. As the same time, continuity is affirmed in the web-like relationship depicted in Wang's object- oriented poems, where both human and non-humans are two of the interdependent components in the

self- nature matrix. The self/ nature relationship in this self- nature matrix is multi-causal and non- linear. With such recognition of continuity and difference between humans and non-humans, the self in Wang's object- oriented poems clearly features key elements of the relational self.

Yet, I am not suggesting that the self/ nature relationship found in Wang's object-oriented poems *is* the relational self, nor am I trying to fit the self/ nature relationship found in Wang's object- oriented poems into the relational self. In fact, to fit the self/ nature account in Wang's object- oriented poems into the relational self is unrealistic. The two, as we have discussed, are different self/ nature accounts fundamentally. For instance, whereas the relational self suggests a subject/ subject relationship, it is impossible to conclude from Wang's object- oriented poems that non-humans are also subjects or agential. Furthermore, as argued above, the ambiguities and uncertainties in Wang's poems indicate a minimization of the poet's rational imposition, enabling a return of freedoms to non-humans and a representation of non-humans in their "purest form". Herein seems to lay another important parallel with the relational self, which also escapes the privileging of rationality. However, while the relational self's rejection of rationality is based largely on the reason/ nature dualism, the minimization of rational self in Wang's object- oriented poems is made on a different ground.

If we further look into the issue of gender, the two accounts of self/ nature relationships may seem to be more controversial. It is true that we are unable to conclude that the self account in Wang's object- oriented poems is either feminine or masculine. The issue of femininity and masculinism does not apply in Wang's poems. Unlike the relational self and ecofeminism, the self account in Wang's object- oriented poems does not formulate a relation with gender. For instance, the lines in "Bird Call Valley", "Human at leisure, cassia flowers fall" (人閒桂花落。), or in "Deer Enclosure", "Empty mountain: no human is seen" (空山不見人。), or in "Bamboo Lodge", "Grove so deep, human do not know" (深林人不知。) all refer to humans, but the Chinese word "human" (人) does not suggest a specific gender. This absence of a specific indication of gender in Wang's object- oriented poems suggests a possibility of overcoming the problem of the relational self's reliance on a gender grounding. Though one may argue that there is an implicit gender bias in Wang's object- oriented poems or that the self account in Wang's object- oriented poems overlooks the difference between women and men, these possible criticisms make clear how the self/ nature account in Wang's object- oriented poems offer an alternative formulation of the relational self. If these criticisms are valid, then interestingly, the self/ nature account in Wang's object- oriented poems is a gender- biased account which can avoid subject/ object dualisms and avoid being masculinist, while at the same time

achieving the same end as the relational self. Even if the self/ nature account in Wang's object- oriented poems is gender- biased, it is a gender- biased account which is able to free itself from the problems of being masculinist, contradictory as it may seem. Relying on a different grounding than ecofeminism's relational self, it nonetheless affirms both continuity and differences between the self and nature, just like ecofeminism's relational self. It is precisely the different groundings of the self/ nature account in Wang's object- oriented poems from the relational self that is valuable for our discussion. There is no need to include any feminine virtues or masculine virtues, or stick to an essentializing women- nature connection to achieve the relational self's closeness to nature. Whether it is gender-biased or not, the continuity and difference between human (self) and nature can still be affirmed. The issue of being gender- biased then no longer matters for the specific question at hand. .

In sum, the self account in Wang's object- oriented poems can be read as an alternative to the relational self escapes the problematical women- nature grounding. It achieves the continuity and difference in the relational self with a different grounding and approach. What I am trying to suggest in this thesis is that, as the relational self proposed by ecofeminism to counter deep ecology's is trapped in an impasse, calling for a third alternative, the self/ nature relationship in Wang's object-oriented poems offers a "different concept of closeness to nature" that ecofeminism

seeks (Plumwood, 1990, p. 232). The self/ nature relationship in Wang's object-oriented poems parallels in affirming both continuity and difference between the self and nature. Yet, while the relational self cannot be clearly established without the problematic grounding of an essential women- nature connection, the self/ nature relationship in Wang's object- oriented poems is clearly accounted for with no recourse to essentialized gender assumptions. In this sense, the self/ nature account in Wang's object- oriented poems may be read as one possible alternative to ecofeminism's relational self.

To recapitulate, the self account in Wang's object- oriented poems offers a way out of the debate between deep ecology and ecofeminism. It offers an alternative that escapes the masculinity bias of deep ecology's Self Realization as well as the problematical gender grounding of ecofeminism's relational self. It achieves the same ends of the relational self — to achieve continuity and difference with nature — on a different ground.

Conclusion

This thesis begins with the anthropocentrism/ androcentrism debate, where problems and causes of the current environmental causes are discussed, and the power structure between human and nature, men and women are revealed. In the debate, deep ecology and ecofeminism indicate different readings of the problems of anthropocentrism. Deep ecology holds that anthropocentrism refers to human's regarding non-humans as mere instruments. Ecofeminism, on the other hand, rejects this view of anthropocentrism. To ecofeminism, the domination of women and the domination of nature (and other oppressions such as race and class) are inter-related. The recognition of the inter-relatedness between oppressions enables one to realize the problematical dualistic structure behind all oppressions. To ecofeminism, deep ecology errs in failing to see through the connections between all oppressions. Ecofeminism calls this more "in-depth" reading of the problems the "liberation model of anthropocentrism" or simply "androcentrism".

Regarding the problem of anthropocentrism, deep ecology proposes a new self/nature relationship model to highlight the connection between human and nature. In Self Realization, through identification, humans come to acknowledge their internal relationship with nature, where the intrinsic value of non-humans is realized.

Non-humans are no longer seen as mere matter. Yet, to ecofeminism, Self Realization is masculinist. As ecofeminism illustrates, to overcome dualism, we have to affirm both continuity and difference. Yet, Self Realization only succeeds in accentuating continuity but fails to acknowledge difference. To ecofeminism, there is no difference between such Self Realization and the masculinist incorporation and subsumption of non-humans.

Although ecofeminism gives a detailed criticism of Self Realization, it fails to provide a well- grounded account of self/ nature relationship. Much has been written on the characteristics of the relational self, the ecofeminists' proposed account of self/ nature relationship based on the recognition of continuity and difference, yet, it is a self/ nature relationship without grounds. This has to be attributed to the problems of ecofeminisms' own grounding. Women- nature connection is the basic grounding of ecofeminism. Many ecofeminists believe that the women- nature connection (which is taken to define femininity most of the time) provides an alternative to the current masculinist model. Yet, this women- nature grounding is highly problematical. First, it is impossible to generalize and define "femininity". Second, it is questionable how revaluating femininity can respond to masculinism. Substituting masculinism by femininity will only result in the reversal of dualism, femininity/ masculinism. Femininity complementing masculinism is equally undesirable since this will reduce

femininity to the complementary roles in supporting masculinism. It is because of these unsolved questions that the women- nature connection remains highly problematical. As ecofeminist Plumwood also fails to escape these problems when proposing the relational self, she refrains from linking between the women- nature connection with the relational self, leaving the relational self without grounds. I suggest in this thesis that the self account found in Wang's object- oriented poems may contribute to resolving this problem of the relational self.

I find that the self/ nature relationship in Wang's object- oriented poems coincides with the relational self in some important aspects. First, in Wang's object- oriented poems, humans and nature are inter-connected in the self- nature- society matrix. In this matrix, humans do not occupy the dominating position, existing only as interrelated components with non-humans in the web. Continuity is thus affirmed. Second, in Wang's object- oriented poems, non-humans interact among themselves, revealing that non-humans are different entities in the self- nature- society matrix. As such, difference is also affirmed. With this agreement with the relational self, the self/ nature relationship in Wang's object- oriented poems provides a "relational self" with a different ground and approach than the women- nature connection that ecofeminism finds difficult to establish. In this sense, the self/ nature account in Wang's object- oriented poems achieves the relational self's end with different means. The self

account in Wang’s object- oriented poems provides a possible alternative to achieve the non-dualistic and non- masculinist sense of self/ nature relationship.

Endnotes

¹ The term “deep ecology- ecofeminism debate” is first coined by Fox in his essay “The deep ecology- ecofeminism debate and its parallels” (Fox, 2001, p. 218).

² There are two ways in which Chinese poetry portrays the relationship between the poet and the objects (non-humans) (Yip [葉], 1980). One of the major characteristics of the first way is the imposition of the poet’s intellectual knowledge to the non-humans. Non-humans are then transformed into concepts. In contrast, in the second way, the poet does not occupy a dominating role and non-humans are represented as if in their “purest form” (Yip, 1997b, p. 13). I translate the terms of the first way as “poet- centric” and the second way as “object- oriented”. These will be further explained in detail in chapter three.

³ The term “non-humans” almost works identical with the term nature in this thesis.

⁴ For convenience sake, in this thesis, I will mainly follow ecofeminism’s criticisms of deep ecology, since this is how the debate got started.

⁵ To Naess, deep ecology is open to reader’s elaboration and interpretation in that “readers are encouraged to elaborate their own versions of deep ecology, clarify key concepts, and think through the consequences of acting from these principles” (1995a, p. 49). Hence, the specific meaning of deep ecology varies among different deep ecologists. For instance, Fox’s deep ecology is different from Naess’s ecosophy T (T

stands for Naess's "mountain hut Tvergastein") over the issue of Self Realization in that Fox puts special attention on the transcendence of self (Naess, 1989, p. 4). This will be further developed in the later part of the thesis.

⁶ Based on these two principles, Naess develops a 8-points "platform of the deep ecology movement" to support practical environmental actions and debate:

(1) The flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth has intrinsic value. The value of non-human life forms is independent of the usefulness these may have for narrow human purposes.

(2) Richness and diversity of life forms are values in themselves and contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth.

(3) Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.

(4) Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.

(5) The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease.

(6) Significant change of life conditions for the better requires change in policies. These affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures.

(7) The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of intrinsic value) rather than adhering to a high standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.

(8) Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes. (1989, p. 29)

⁷ Deborah Slicer criticizes deep ecology as having a “very shallow understanding” of ecofeminism that deep ecology misrepresents ecofeminism (1995, p. 155). As Slicer criticized, deep ecologist Fox only understands “the ecofeminism” which has been filtered by “two male writers, Michael Zimmerman and Jim Cheney” (p. 152). She questions why Fox relies on the readings of two male writers instead of focusing on the writings by other dominant female ecofeminists.

⁸ According to Plumwood, this dualistic structure can also explain the hierarchical structure between colonizer/ colonized, men/ women and human/ nature dualisms.

⁹ To most ecofeminists, the women- nature connection is automatically equal to feminine values or femininity. For instance, To Salleh (1984), the women- nature connection equals to feminine virtues such as childbirth and motherhood. Though Plumwood (1990) is not explicit, it is apparent that the women- nature connection equals to femininity in her essay.

¹⁰ As indicated in the essay title, “Still fooling with mother nature”, Cuomo (2001) criticizes Salleh for failing to problematize gender, and confining femininity to mere motherhood. Due to this emphasis on motherhood, Scandilands even names ecofeminism as “motherhood environmentalism” (Scandilands, 1999, p. xiii).

¹¹ Though it is unclear of how Eisler defines “femininity”, she highlights the importance of the re-affirmation of female and femininity in her essay (1990).

¹² Noteworthy, masculinism and femininity here refers to the issue of traits of “human ideal”; as masculinism sets the human traits, to be a human means to be a man.

¹³ Some other ecofeminists focus on the empirical connections between women and nature. (for example Warren, 1997; Diamond, 1990; Allen, 1990; Shiva, 1990) One of the leading figures, Vandana Shiva (1988, 1990) focuses on the first world/ third world development. She proposes that development is a process of colonization, as development is equated with western progress. In the process of development, anything which does not produce profit is being regarded as unproductive. Women’s productivity has been destroyed by the destruction and removal of land, water and forests. Women, together with nature and the tribal and peasant societies are seen as unproductive and ought to be abandoned.

Some ecofeminists have grounded their discussion on cultural and social context. An

example given by King is the fight and revolution held by Indian women, called “*Chipko Andolan* (the hugging movement)” (King, p. 118). It is a movement aiming at the protection of the forest. To resist the land reform in India, women hug trees, using their bodies to resist bulldozers. This non- violence movement soon spread through the whole India in 1970s and 1980s. The point King argues here is that the whole campaign was held by women, men on the other hand joined in the governmental force. “[W]omen have been at the forefront of every historical, political movement to reclaim the Earth” that women are in fact “closer to nature than men” (King, 1990, p. 118; King, 1993, p. 70).

¹⁴ Plumwood (1991, 1993) also criticizes Fox’s transpersonal ecology as creating a transcendental self and hence being masculinist. As explained above, Fox particularly advocates for the ontological and cosmological levels of identification, as he believes, personally based identification may lead to war and destruction. Plumwood finds such a transcendent self problematic in two ways. First, this transcendent self is a kind of devaluation of personal relationship, emotions and sensibility, which reproduces the dualistic devaluation brought by rationality. So far as deep ecology fails to recognize the fact that rationality justifies the superior group’s dualistic exclusion of others, the problematic human/ nature and men/ women dualisms remain. Second, to transcend the concrete world and drive for something transcendental and abstract are the

characteristics of the masculine self.

¹⁵ I adhere to Yip's ([葉] 1980, 1991) and Yu (1987; 1980)'s analyses in this thesis.

¹⁶ Though the poet Wang Wei is a male, the self found in the poems does not necessarily indicate a difference in gender. It is hence important to acknowledge for the openness of this vagueness of gender in the poems.

¹⁷ Translation adapted from Yip (1997a, p. 225)

¹⁸ Translation adapted from Yu (1980, p. 204) and Yip (1997a, p.226)

¹⁹ Translation adapted from Yu (1980, p.145) and Yip (1997a, p. 189)

²⁰ Yip [葉] points out the significance of the flexibility of Chinese to the ambiguity and vagueness in Chinese poems: first, the absence of subjects and objects in Chinese and second, the missing of conjunction words. (1980, 1991[葉], 1997b) The missing subjects and objects in Chinese open up the possibilities of the references. In contrast, the necessary subject and object indicated in the English fail to demonstrate the vagueness. For instance, English does not allow for the absence of the subject in a sentence. Both "Deer Enclosure" and "Bamboo Lodge" are absent of a definite and specific subject. In the third line of "Bamboo Lodge", both subject and object in the phrase "do not know" are unspecified and unsaid. The phrase "do not know" can refer to the subject who "do not know", to the object that someone do not know about the deep wood. Another example can be found in "Visiting the Temple of Gathered

Fragrance". In the phrase "Ancient trees, paths without people", it is unknown if the word "path" or the word "people" is the predicate of the sentence. Hence, it can be read in at least two ways, path without people or without a human path. It is this flexibility of Chinese that helps to preserve the multiplicities and vagueness of the poems.

Furthermore, the indeterminateness in the poems is due to the missing of conjunction words and the indicative words in the poems. For instance, when connectives or indicative words are added in "Visiting Temple of Gathered Fragrance", the poem immediately results in a logical and linear meaning. Take the first two couplets as examples: "I do know the Temple of Gathered Fragrance, I walk miles and miles into cloud-peaks. In a place where ancient trees and paths without people, I hear bell rains deep in the mountain." In this translation, with the addition of connective words, meanings are immediately reduced to one.

²¹ The losing of self, the submergence of self, or the stepping aside of the poet are synonymous in this thesis. These words are used to describe the non-concreteness, passivity and non-intervention of the poet.

²² Indeed, to analyze Wang's poetry without taking Buddhism into account will only result in a superficial analysis (Yu, 1980; Chen [陳], 1993).

²³ More examples can be found in Wang Wei's poetry. For instance, "Stone Gate

Monastery on Mt. Lantian” (藍田山石門精舍) is similar to “Visiting the Temple of Gathered Fragrance”, where the poet lets himself led by nature.

²⁴ Translation adapted from Yu (1980, p. 204) and Yip (1997a, p.228)

²⁵ Translation adapted from Yu (1980, p. 200)

²⁶ For more examples see, for example, “In Response to Vice-Magistrate Zhang” (酬張少府), “Green Creek” (青溪).

²⁷ This term is adapted from de Silva’s “self-society-nature matrix” or “human-society-nature matrix” (1998, p. 30). The term revises the term nature with particular emphasis on, first, as de Silva quotes Bernard Williams, the “ineliminable human’s perspective” (1998, p.30). And second, this term is significant in depicting the multi- causal and inter-related human/ nature relationship I described in Wang’s poems. Yet, the context in Wang’s poems seems not including the discussion of society, the term is hence revised as “self- nature matrix” in this thesis.

¹ More examples can be found in “Clear Bamboo Range” (斤竹嶺): “Tall and dense, they gleam by the empty riverbend; Azure-green, billowing, flowing waves.” (檀欒映空曲。青翠漾漣漪。) (Yu, p. 202); “Dwelling in the Mountains: An Autumn Evening” (山居秋暝): “The bright moon, amid the pines, shines. The clear stream, over rocks, flows.” (明月松間照。清泉石上流。) (Yu, p. 196-197); and “Green Creek” (青溪): “Tossing lightly, water chestnuts float; Clear and still, reeds and rushes gleam.” (漾漾

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